CONTINENCE AND ITS CREATIVE POWER

by

SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

Late President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Karachi;
Author of 'Swami Vivekananda and Modern India
'Gita' 'Chandi' etc.

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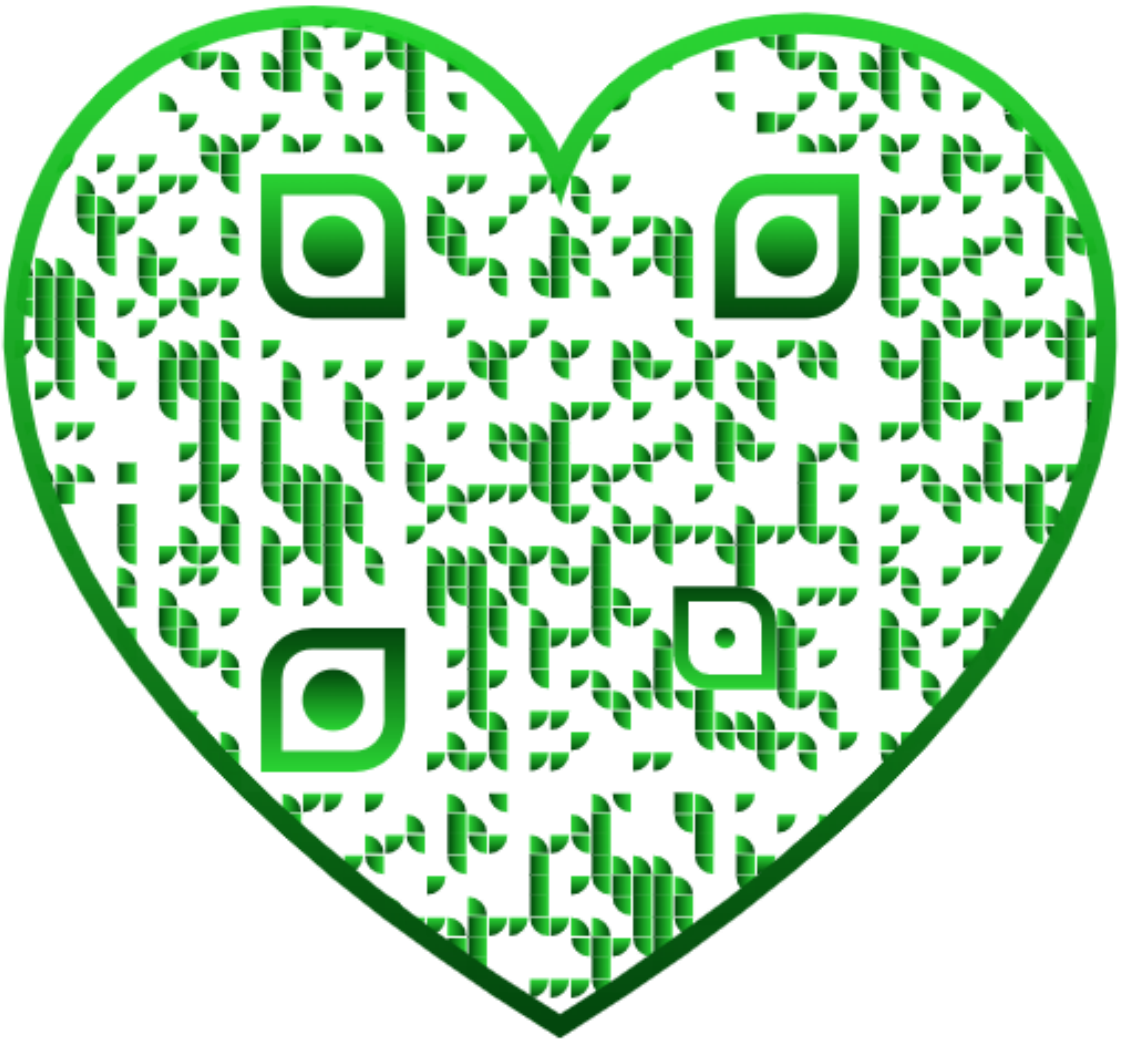

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Dedicated to my revered Guru
SWAMI SHIVANANDA
a direct disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna)
whose blessings have kindled the
Light of Truth in my life.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

An outline of this essay first appeared in the 'Vedanta Kesari' of Madras in July 1941 and was later reproduced in 'The Daily Gazette' of Karachi in the same year. At the time of its publication in the above two esteemed papers, young men of Bengal and Sind were so impressed that several requests poured in from them for amplifying it into a booklet. This essay, in its present form, is an humble attempt in fulfilment of their enthusiastic demand. J. S. Mill has rightly pointed out that one can heal the ills from which the society suffers by speaking openly about them. Following the footsteps of great reformers, like Gandhiji, I have ventured to point out the root-cause of our present degeneration and have tried to show by quoting various Indian and Western authorities that continence should be the law of both our individual and collective life and without it all aspirations of progress are no better than day-dreams. I do not know how far I have succeeded in presenting this ideal, but if this book helps our youth to realise even to a little extent the necessity of continence in daily life, my humble labours will be amply rewarded. I have freely quoted from the books referred to in this essay and have given some practical hints as well. If this edition meets with a warm response, I plan to bring out the second edition in a much bigger form for which I am collecting materials from now on.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

Swami Jagadiswarananda.

Sri Ramakrishna Math,
Karachi, Mahastami, 1941.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Through the grace of God the first edition of this booklet was exhausted in less than a year. The booklet was fortunately well-appreciated by the press and the public all over the country and sincere appreciations have come from abroad. A reader from South Africa writes: "It is a book worth while keeping in the public libraries and at home and more important still in the schools throughout the world." Some opinions are given in the appendix. It is a great satisfaction to me to know that the book has been useful to some at least. As promised in the preface to the first edition, the book is almost doubly enlarged and thoroughly revised in the second edition and much new materials have been added. I hope this edition, like the first, will meet with warm reception from young readers. I am very grateful to Messrs. Thacker & Co. Ltd., Bombay for undertaking the publication of the book.

Swami Jagadiswarananda.

Ramakrishna Mission,
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CONTINENCE AND ITS CREATIVE POWER

INDIA, THE CRADLE OF CONTINENCE

INDIA was the only country that practised continence in the ancient ages. It was some of the Vedic Rishis on whom first dawned this noble ideal of life. We have it in the Prasna Upanishad that when six Rishis, *viz.* Sukesha, Bharadwaja and others, came to Rishi Pippalada for receiving the highest wisdom, the latter asked them to observe continence for one year more, at the end of which he promised to initiate them into the highest wisdom. Again in the Chhandogya Upanishad we have the dialogue of Indra, Virochana and Brahma, where Brahma taught Indra the knowledge of Reality, after making him undergo Brahmacharya (continence) for hundred-and-one years.

From India this ideal of perfect continence spread to the Neo-Platonists in Egypt and to Pythagoreans in Greece, and then to many other countries of Europe in later days in a more or less degree. It was again from India that this idea spread to various countries of Asia. The Persians took it from India. The Buddhist preachers carried it far and wide. The Essenes took it from the Buddhists; the Christians partly from the Neo-Platonists and partly from the Essenes.

No people have emphasised the need of continence so strongly as the Indians. For them it is the firmest

foundation of life. Sister Nivedita remarks that of all the ideals which have ever been conceived of, of student life in any country, that of continence is the highest and the noblest. According to Yoga Sastra, celibacy is the *sine qua non* of perfect health and longevity. In the view of Ayurveda धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणा मारोग्य-मूलमुत्तमम् i.e., diseaselessness or good health is the root of the four ends of life, — Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. But continence is the foundation of all health. Sacred books of all religions extol its creative power and enjoin it as the cardinal virtue in spiritual life. For example, religious widows and spiritual aspirants, vowed to voluntary chastity and poverty, keep up generally a youthful appearance even in a ripe old age and live an unusually long life.

WHAT IT MEANS TO GENIUSES

"All great mystics and the majority of great idealists, the giants among the Creators of the Spirit," remarks Romain Rolland, "have clearly and instinctively realised what formidable power of concentrated soul, of accumulated creative energy, is generated by renunciation of the organic and psychic expenditure of sexuality." Even free thinkers in matters of faith, even such sensualists as Beethoven, Balzac, and Flaubert have felt this ! "Let me keep it for a higher purpose—for God and the creative art," cried Beethoven one day when he had repulsed the appeal of carnal passion. "Painting is a jealous mistress who suffers no rival," replied Michael Angelo when marriage was suggested to him. The celebrated chemist P. C. Roy was once asked why he had not married. He said with a smile that he had already married but he had married Chemistry ! When the

great patriot Subhas Bose was requested to consider the question of his marriage he frankly admitted that he had no time to think of it as he was whole-heartedly occupied with the struggle for freedom of his country. Plato speaks highly of the continence of the Greek athletes. Mahatma Gandhi states in "Self-Control *versus* Self-Indulgence" that it is celibacy which has endowed him with mental strength and physical vigour. "If even after twenty years of sensual enjoyment," Mahatmaji confesses in his saintly simplicity "I have been able to reach this state, how much better should I have been if I had kept myself pure during those twenty years as well ? It is my full conviction that if only I had lived a life of unbroken Brahmacharya all through my life my energy and enthusiasm would have been a thousandfold greater. If an imperfect Brahmachari like myself can reap such benefit how much more wonderful shall be the gain in power—physical, mental as well as moral —that unbroken Brahmacharya can bring to us !" Gandhiji further testifies that politics is the evanescent and least part of his life whereas continence is the real and permanent part of his life. Buddha instructed his lay disciples that in order to put an end to suffering they should practise continence. Lambichus states that the gods do not hear him who invokes them when he is impure from sexual connections. In Islam strict celibacy is required on the pilgrimage to Mecca. Continence is observed by the Hebrew congregation during the Theophany at Sinnai and before entering the temple. In Christianity continence was required as a preparation for both baptism and the eucharist. Christian teachers and devotees practised and praised celibacy. The Roman Catholic

Church Bishops are always celibates and are alway chosen from the monks. In reality none has don greater service to his country and the world at large than the continent saints and savants. We may tak St. Paul, Immanuel Kant and Sir Isaac Newton a examples. Jesus Christ says, "And there are eunuch who had made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdon of Heaven's sake." (Matthew, XIX:12)

OPINIONS OF SOME, OPPOSED TO CONTINENCI

A section of the scientists, having a large follow ing in India and elsewhere, disfavour total abstinenc and stigmatize it as a dangerous practice.They argu that sexual glands have an internal secretion which if generated in large quantities, may produce toxi effects on the system. This, they contend, has bee proved by the experiments of Loisel who injecte extracts from such sexual glands into other animal and observed the toxic effects. The second argumen put forward by them is that the accumulation of thi vital secretion of testes, may prove injurious to th glands themselves, sometimes even leading to thei atrophy. Regand and Mingazzini made experiment on guinea pigs and female animals and found seriou modifications in the sexual glands of these animal after enforced abstinence and made the abov inference. Besides, Kisch and Lorand observe several cases where enforced abstinence resulted i impotence and early disappearance of menstruation Lastly, they think that celibacy may have injuriou effects on the nervous system, giving rise to hysteri and neurasthenia. A high percentage of nervou diseases, according to them, is found in old bachelor and spinsters.

Similar views are upheld by many prominent authorities like Munde, Franklin, and others, who maintain that by the disuse of sex-organs, the sex endocrine glands become functionally impaired. Fowler, Bertillon and others therefore suggest that sexual activities should be indulged in at regular intervals to promote health. The eminent psychologist J. A. Hadfield in his book **Psychology and Morals** observes that sexual abstinence practised under the false ideal, that the instinct is but a low pleasure, often produces irritability and the weakening of love. Edward Carpenter remarks in his **The Drama of Love and Death,** "But equally absurd is any attempt to limit love to the spiritual, with a somewhat lofty contempt for the material—in which case it tends to become too like trying to paint a picture without the use of pigments. All the phases are necessary, or at least desirable—even if a quite complete and all-round relation is seldom realised." But it is vigorously maintained by other authorities like Rosenau and Lipschutz that continence is quite compatible with health, and that sex-glands are like the tear-glands and sweat-glands which do no atrophy with disuse.

UPTON SINCLAIR, ALDOUS HUXLEY & DAVID THOREAU ON CHASTITY

Upton Sinclair, the famous American author, very wrongly defines celibacy as the permanent and systematic suppression of love. This mistaken notion makes him regard celibacy as a perversion of life, a violation of nature, an intellectual and moral disease of humanity, an abominable old ideal, a monkish view of love and a danger to social health. He,

however, takes care to draw a distinction between what he calls celibacy and what he calls chastity. His definition of chastity however gives us relief; for, he defines chastity as the permanent and systematic suppression of lust and is not a denial of love. He, therefore, thinks that chastity is one of the essential virtues in the young and must form an essential part of any regimen of true and enduring love. If that is the definition of chastity, then, in our opinion, celibacy or continence is nothing but chastity, for continence aims at the eradication of lust and establishment of pure love in life. On the other hand continent persons are capable of real love as their love is not confined to any particular individual but is radiated over all. It is ignorant to insist that love between the sexes can never be perfect without physical expression. Sri Ramakrishna's life in the modern age is a perfect specimen of the age-old truth that love is not dependent on sex or any consideration of physical intimacy. Many a modern thinker on questions of sex-life is disposed to separate the life of love from the function of procreation and invest the former with an independent value in itself in spite of the association one finds between them in nature. Even a Christian writer like Nicholas Berdyaev argues that to make love dependent on, or subordinate to, procreation is to transfer the principle of cattle-breeding to human relation. Poet Nanalal, the greatest poet of modern Gujrat, shows in his masterpiece, "Jaya and Jayanta", (a drama in three acts) that love is possible without physical union or sexual contact. Princess Jaya and Prince Jayanta of his drama loved each other very deeply; yet they refused marriage and observed continence life-long. Jayanta took to

monastic life, whereas Jaya remained an eternal virgin taking the following vow :—

"That no male body's touch will ever pollute my frame this life.
As the touch of the lightning streak does burn,
So does the touch of my virgin frame scorch whosoever touches."

Jaya and Jayanta spent their lives as pilgrims to the Supreme Light, vowed to chastity to the end of time. Poet Nanalal says :

"When man and woman will over Cupid score a victory
The earth will shine like the Land of Supreme Light."
"The earth is won when the passions are cool
The world succumbs when the Eros flies."

Poet Nanalal in the introduction to the same drama pertinently observes : "It is true that the vow of such a life has not been carried to a successful end in many cases and those who never break it are exceptional and the life-stories of the inmates of monasteries both in our country as well as in Europe, are not uniformly bright and clean, yet mankind cannot afford to forget the message conveyed by the Ramayana through the life of the ever celibate Hanuman ; and by the Mahabharata through the life-story of the warrior, Bhisma who promised never to marry. In this age of ever increasing sensuousness, the song of the glory of renouncing all opportunities of sensuous enjoyment will sound harsh and out of date to many. The path of Platonic love and spiritual celibacy is not smooth; there are infinite temptations on the way, there is risk at every stage ; but the heroism of a rarely heroic soul lies in his careless-

ness and supreme faith in the midst of all risks. This, however, must be made clear that the path is not meant for anybody and everybody. It can only be taken up by rarely self-controlled men and women."

But love must be impersonal. As soon as it becomes personal it turns carnal and sensual. Lust is another name for physical love. Henry David Thoreau rightly says that love and lust are as far asunder as a flower-garden is from a brothel. "We must love our friend," says Thoreau, "so much that she must be associated with our purest and holiest thoughts alone. May we so love that we may have no occasion to repent of our love. When the affectionate sympathise by their higher nature there is love ; but there is danger when they sympathise with their lower nature and then there is lust. In the close contact of affection there is danger of staining and polluting one another." Thoreau further says that chastity is something positive and never negative and it is the virtue of the married especially. "When love becomes impure and physical it produces reactions but pure love has no reactions," remarked a sage to me. Bertrand Russell in his **What I believe** says that love has two aspects—self-delight and well-wishing. The former is the personal element; the less it exists the purer is the love. The latter is the impersonal element; and the more it is cultivated the more universal and unselfish is the love. Impersonal love is impossible without chastity or rather continence. Love is by nature intellectual. When it turns physical it is lust and again when sanctified it is spiritual. The Biblical saying that love is the law of life means that love is divine. In order to purify love it is to be deified. Deification of love means to see in the object of love

the presence of the divine. In the famous Bengali Drama **Vilvamangal** by Girish Chandra Ghose, now translated into other languages, real philosophy of love is beautifully described. Vilvamangal loved Chintamani, a fallen woman so passionately that he could not pass a day without seeing her. On even the 'Shraddha' day of his father Vilvamangal came to see his lover at night crossing the river on the way by means of a decomposed dead body and as the doors of her house were closed he scaled the walls with the help of a big long snake ! Chintamani was amazed and told him to love God with that intensity with which he loved her. Vilvamangal's eyes were opened. He realised that man is never satisfied by loving the finite—any earthly individual or object. Man gets final satisfaction by loving the Infinite. That is why the vedic Rishi proclaims भूमैव सुखम्, नाल्पे सुखमस्ति Infinite alone is bliss, there is no bliss in the finite. The case of Saint Tulsidas is somewhat similar to that of Vilvamangal. So, chastity in the married cannot stand without continence in the unmarried life. Upton Sinclair will certainly admit the necessity of continence if he thinks deeply about the problem of chastity in the married.

Aldous Huxley, in the last chapter of his famous book **Ends and Means,** while discussing Ethics, says that a measure of sexual continence is the pre-condition of all forms of mental energy, conative, emotional as well as cognitive. He emphasises that chastity is the most major virtue of life, for without it society will lack in energy, and individuals will be condemned to perpetual unawareness, attachment, and animality. He reiterates that chastity is the necessary pre-codition to any kind of moral life superior to that of an animal.

SCIENTISTS ON THE BENEFITS OF CONTINENCE

Doctor Malchow considers that the preservation of the internal secretion of sex-glands within the body has the greatest physiological value. He holds that the fluids emitted during an orgasm are not waste material, and that their retention would in themselves not be altogether a disadvantage. He is of opinion that such preservation contributes largely towards the acquisition of a strong constitution, both physical and mental, through bio-chemical economy, as the emissions dissociate a large percentage of iron, phosphorus, and calcium from blood. Malchow in his **The Sexual Life** (p. 34) remarks that it is a deep and discriminating knowledge of psychology of man which requires the elimination of sexuality in order to ensure greater enthusiasm, deeper devotion, and mental concentration for a spiritual cause. In **Natural Therapeutics** (Vol. II. p. 318) it is said that the sex-fluid is the carrier of the life-force. During abstinence the sex-fluid with its creative energy is absorbed through the inguinal glands into the organism and increases physical, moral and spiritual capacity and energy. It is upheld by **Encyclopædia of Physical Culture** (Vol. V, p. 2450) that one part of semen is equal to many parts of pure blood, and that when absorbed again into the system this fluid is transformed into nerve energy. Poehl's experiments with spermine and latest treatment with active harmona for producing rejuvenating effects add materially to the above belief. According to Hindu scriptures natural age for a man is one hundred years. Milton Severen of the West remarks in this connection: "That one may attain to the age of one hundred years or

more is no visionary statement. According to psychological and natural laws, the duration of human lives should be at least five times the period necessary to reach full growth. This is a prevailing law which is exemplified in the brute creation. The horse grows about four years and lives to about 12 to 14 ; the camel grows on for eight years and lives to about 40. Man grows from 20 to 25; if accidents could be excluded, his normal duration of life should not be less than one hundred years." Continence is thus the true secret of longevity.

There are other western doctors who hold similar views like that of Malchow and advocate that celibacy does prolong life. Dr. Nichols writes : "It is a medical, a physiological fact that the best blood in the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both sexes. In a pure and orderly life this matter is absorbed and goes back into circulation ready to form the finest brain, nerve, and muscular tissue. This matter carried back and diffused through his system makes him manly, strong, brave, and heroic. If wasted, it leaves him effeminate, weak and irresolute, intellectually and physically debilitated and a prey to sexual irritation, irregular function, morbid sensation, disordered muscular movement, a wretched nervous system, epilepsy, insanity and death." Dr. Nichols further adds that the suspension of the use of the generative organ is attended with a notable increase of mental and bodily vigour and spiritual life. Medical authorities assert that energy wasted in one sexual act shatters the nervous system so much that it is tantamount to the expenditure of mental energy in mental work of 24 hours or to physical energy in physical work of 7 days.

TESTIMONIES OF MEDICAL AUTHORITIES

That continence is not detrimental and impossible but absolutely necessary and perfectly possible is evident from the following medical testimonies of the eminent authorities on this subject :

"The sexual instinct," says Oesterlen, Professor at Tubigen University, "is not so blindly all-powerful that it cannot be controlled, and even subjugated entirely, by moral strength and reason. The young man, like the young woman, should learn to control himself until the proper time. He must know that robust health and ever-renewed vigour will be the reward of this voluntary sacrifice. One cannot repeat too often that abstinence and the most absolute purity are perfectly compatible with the laws of physiology and morality, and that sexual indulgence is no more justified by physiology and psychology than by morality and religion."

"The example of the best and noblest among men," says Sir Lionel Beale, Professor at the Royal College in London, "has at all times proved that the most imperious of instincts can be effectively resisted by a strong and serious will, and by sufficient care as to manner of life and occupation. Sexual abstinence has never yet hurt any man when it has been observed, not only through exterior restrictive causes, but as a voluntary rule of conduct. Virginity, in fine, is not too hard to observe, provided that it is the physical expression of a certain state of mind. Chastity implies, not only continence, but also purity of sentiments, the energy which is the result of deep convictions."

"All causes of sexual disturbance," says the Swiss psychologist Forel, "increase the intensity of desire.

By avoiding these provocations it becomes less sensitive, and the desire gradually diminishes. The idea is current among young people that continence is something abnormal and impossible and yet the many who observe it prove that chastity can be practised without prejudice to the health."

"I know," says Ribbing, "a number of men of 25, 30 and older than that, who have observed perfect continence, or who when they married had done so upto that time. Such cases are not rare ; only they don't advertise themselves."

"Before marriage, absolute continence can and ought to be observed by young men," says Dr. Acton. "Chastity no more injures the body than the soul," declares Sir James Paget, physician to the English court ; "and Discipline is better than any other line of conduct."

"It is a singularly false notion," writes Dr. E. Perier, "and one which must be fought against, since it besets not only the children's mind, but that of the fathers as well—the notion of imaginary dangers in absolute continence. Virginity is a physical, moral and intellectual safe-guard to young men."

"Continence," says Sir Andrew Clarke, "does no harm, it does not hinder development, it increases energy and enlivens perception. Incontinence weakens self-control, creates habits of slackness, dulls and degrades the whole being, and lays it open to diseases which can be transmitted to several generations. To say that incontinence is necessary to the health of young men is not only an error but a cruelty if not a crime. It is at once false and hurtful."

"The evils of incontinence are well-known and undisputed," writes Dr. Surbled. "Those produced

by continence are imaginary; what proves this is the fact of the many learned and voluminous works devoted to the explanation of the former while the latter still await their historian. As to these latter there are but vague assertions, which hide themselves, for very shame, in mere talk, but which will not endure the daylight."

Dr. Dubois, the famous professor of Neuropathology at Berne, affirms that "there are more victims of neurasthenia among those who give free rein to their sensuality than among those who know how to escape from the yoke of mere animalism," and his witness is fully confirmed by that of Dr. Fere, physician at the Bicertre Hospital, who testifies that those who are capable of psychic chastity can maintain their continence without any fear for their health, which does not depend on the satisfaction of the sexual instinct.

"There has been unfitting and light talk," writes Professor Alfred Fourner, "about the dangers of continence for the young men. I can assure you that if these dangers exist I know nothing about them, and that as a physician I am still without proof of their existence, though I have had every opportunity in the way of subjects under my professional observation. Sexual precocity is merely artificial and is most often the result of ill-directed up-bringing."

"I have never seen" writes Dr. Montegazza, "a disease produced by continence, but who is not aware of those frightful diseases of which moral indiscipline is the source. The body finds itself converted into an indescribable state of rottenness. Nor can we forget the worst defilement of imagination, heart and understanding. All men, and young men in parti-

cular, can experience the immediate benefit of chastity. The memory is quiet and tenacious, the brain lively and fertile, the will energetic, the whole character gains a strength of which libertines have no conception ; no prism shows us our surroundings under such heavenly colours as that of chastity, which lights up with its rays the least objects in the universe, and transports us into the purest joys of an abiding happiness that knows neither shadow nor decline." And the doctor adds : "The joy, the cordial merriment, the sunny confidence of vigorous young men who have remained chaste, are an eloquent contrast to the restless obsessions and feverish excitement of their companions who are slaves to the demands of sensuality."

In the second General Congress of the International Conference of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis held at Brussels in 1902, a resolution was unanimously passed by the hundred and two most competent authorities on the subject throughout the world, assembled in the Congress, that young men must above all be taught that chastity and continence are not only not harmful, but also that these virtues are among those to be most earnestly recommended from the purely medical and hygienic stand-point.

A few years ago the professors of the Medical Faculty of Christiania University issued a unanimous declaration that "the assertion that a chaste life will be prejudicial to the health rests, according to our unanimous experience, on no foundation. We have no knowledge of any harm resulting from a pure and moral life."

M. Ruyssen is of opinion that it is a physiological truth that the sexual appetite does not need, like the

requirements of aliment and exercise, a minimum of necessary satisfaction. "It is a fact," he adds "that man or woman can lead a chaste life without experiencing, except in the case of a few abnormal subjects, serious disturbance or even painful inconvenience. It has been said,—and cannot be too often repeated, since such an elementary truth cannot be so widely disregarded —that no disease ever comes through continence to normal subjects, who form the immense majority, while many diseases, very well known and very serious, are the results of incontinence. Nature has provided in the most simple and infallible way for the excess of nutrition which is represented by the seminal fluid and the menstrual flux. While continence is a virtue full of repose, incontinence opens the door to an unknown guest who may become formidable. The revelation of passion which is troublesome at any age may become in youth the signal of a radical perversion, we would say, of an irreparable disturbance of the balance of the will and the senses."

Sexual appetite is neither a true instinct nor a real need. "Every one knows," Dr. Viry observes, "what it would cost him not to satisfy the need of nourishment or to suppress respiration but no one quotes any pathological consequences, either acute or chronic, as having followed either temporary or absolute continence. In normal life we see the example of chaste men who are neither less virile in character nor less energetic in will, nor less robust than other, nor less fitted to become fathers, if they marry. A need which can be subject of such variations, an instinct which accommodates itself so well to lack of satisfaction is neither a need nor an instinct.

Sexual relationship is far from answering to any physiological need of the growing boy ; quite the contrary, it is perfect chastity which is sternly required by the exigencies of his normal growth and development and those who violate it cause irreparable injury to their health."

The great British physiologist, John G. M. Kendrick, Professor of Physiology at Glasgow University, says : "The illicit satisfaction of nascent passion is not only a moral fault but a terrible injury to the body. The new need becomes a tyrant if yielded to; a guilty complacency will listen to it and make it more imperious ; every fresh act will forge a new link in the chain of habit. Many have no longer strength to break it and helplessly end in physical and intellectual ruin, slaves of a habit contacted often through ignorance rather than perversity. The safeguard consists in cultivating within oneself purity of thought and discipline of one's whole being."

In the same strain Dr. Franke Escande observes: "As to sexual desire we assert the intelligence and the will have absolute control over it. It is necessary to employ the term sexual **desire, not need,** for there is no question of a function the non-accomplishment of which is incompatible with existence. Really it is not a need at all; but many men are persuaded that it is. The interpretation they give to the desire makes them look on cohabitation as absolutely necessary. Now we cannot look on sexual act as resulting from senile and passive obedience to natural laws. We are, on the contrary, concerned with a voluntary act, following a determination or acquiescence, often premeditated and prepared for."

MARRIAGE AND CONTINENCE

"The vow of the voluntary celibate," says Foerster, "far from degrading marriage is on the contrary the best support of the sanctity of the conjugal love, since it represents in concrete form man's freedom in the face of the pressure of his nature. It acts like a conscience with regard to passing whims and sensual assaults. Celibacy is also a protection in the sense that its existence prevents married people from looking upon themselves in their mutual relations as mere slaves to obscure natural forces and it leads them to take openly, in the face of nature, the position of free beings who are capable of mastery. Those who scoff at perpetual celibacy as unnatural or impossible do not know really what they are doing. They fail to see that the line of thought which makes them talk, as they do, must necessarily lead, by strict logic, to prostitution and polygamy. If the demand of nature is irresistible, how can a chaste life be required of married people? And lastly, they forget the great number of marriages in which, it may be for several months or years, or even for life, one of the spouses is condemned to real celibacy by the sickness or other disability of the partner. For this reason alone, true monogamy rises or falls with the esteem that is paid to celibacy."

Malthus, who startled this generation by the theory of over-population and his advocacy of birth-control, recommended continence. The doctrine of Malthus makes a law of the necessity of moral strength to preserve humanity from formidable scourges. Malthus himself believed that it is this special form of moral strength i.e. continence that can solve the most tragic of all problems of married life. But unfortu-

nately neo-Malthusianism does not support continence but advises the use of chemical and mechanical means to avoid the consequences of animal indulgence. But when the historical facts are known there is no longer room for surprise that it is celibacy, voluntary or under necessity, temporary or perpetual, that contributed in Europe during the middle ages and until the nineteenth century not a little to the solution of this problem.

It will be interesting to analyse methodically the practice of accepted or voluntary celibacy in France and England previous to the nineteenth century. For noble families there were institutions that involved celibacy; the order of Malta and various Benifices for the boys; the Noble Chapter for the girls. "Numa was said to have instituted the order of vestal virgins. They remained unmarried for thirty years. Burial alive was the penalty for breaking the vow of chastity. The vestal virgins were distinguished by extraordinary influence and personal dignity. They were treated with marks of respect usually accorded to royalty; thus on the streets they were preceded by a lictor, and the highest magistrates made way for them. They enjoyed sometimes the exceptional privilege of riding in a carriage ; at public games a place of honour was assigned to them and after death they, like the Imperators, were allowed to be buried within the city, because they were above the laws. They enjoyed the royal privilege of mercy; for if they met a criminal on the way to execution, his life was spared: (From "Practice of Brahmacharya" by Swami Shivananda of Rishikesh. p. 93). The Peruvian priests known as "virgins of the sun" were punished with living burial if detected in immoral conduct. The

Buddhist order enforced very stringent discipline of continence on the monks. For violation of the rules they were disrobed and expelled from the order. At Darjeeling there is a large colony of Tibetans with several hundreds of men doing cooly's work. They are none but ex-lamas who fled from Tibet in order to escape the severe penalties attaching to their breach of celibacy. In the Tibetan order of Buddhist monks, the delinquent is denounced and if caught red-handed, is subject to corporeal chastisement in public and expulsion from the order. In ancient India, continence was compulsory for both boys and girls in student life. Even about two thousand years ago (i.e. 300 B.C.) during the time of Emperor Chandragupta, Indian students used to practise continence till the 37th year of life. According to Strabo, Megasthenes had noted that the students were under the control of learned men and lived for 37 years as Brahmacharis before becoming householders. Even princes used to live with their gurus in student life as Brahmacharis. Sri Krishna himself fulfilled in his youth this ancient custom by living in the house of his teacher, Sandipani.

In early Hindu Society girls like boys were invested, and subsequently initiated into Vedic study and Hindu religious life and observed continence in the pre-puberty period. It is also recognised by orthodox Smritis. The condition that existed in ancient Hindu society is well reflected in the following verse from the Smriti of Yama.

पुराकल्पे कुमारीणां मौञ्जीबन्धनमिष्यते ।
अध्यापनञ्च वेदानां सावित्रीवचनं तथा ॥

That is: "In the former ages girls were invested with

sacred thread (Upanayan). They could teach the Vedas and repeat the Savitri mantra." It is also known from ancient literature that women performed Vedic sacrificial rites like men. In the second kanda of the Ramayana, it is found that Kausalya performs Swasti Yaga alone. Again in the second (18-19, 88) as well as in the fifth kanda (15, 48) Sita twice discloses her discharging religious duties in the morning and evening like men. Even Jaimini quotes Badarayana to show that women could perform Vedic sacrifices. The recognition automatically presupposed investiture with sacred thread and Vedic education. Dr. Altekar, Professor of Benares Hindu University, in his very interesting book, "Women in Hindu Civilisation", rightly observes: "Women enjoyed these religious privileges more or less till the beginning of the Christian era. But changes were gradually coming in. At 500 B.C. as we may gather from Harit Smriti (XX, 23) quoted by Sayanacharya in his commentary on Parasar Samhita, a few women Brahmavadinis made an extensive study of the Vedas after Upanayana and the majority of the girls (sadyabadhus) underwent the formality of the ceremony shortly before marriage. The Brahmavadinis did not marry but followed the ascetic life. Many centuries later Manu (Manu Samhita II-66) favoured women's Upanayana without the reciting of Vedic mantras. Still later writers like Yajnavalkya (200 A.D.) advocated the more straightforward but condemnable course of prohibiting the ceremony altogether. It is interesting to note in this connection that among the Parsis (Zoroastrians), a branch of the ancient Vedic Aryans, the ceremony is still performed for girls also."

Some of the well-known women of early Sans-

krit literature like Gargi in Brihadaranyak Upanishad, Sulabha in the Mahabharat, Sabari in the Ramayana, lived celibate lives. Even in married life continence was strictly enjoined by the Hindu law-givers like Manu. For the married, coition was permitted once at the end of the monthly period till conception was established. The couple after having one or two children should live as brother and sister, says Sri Ramakrishna who has proved in the modern age that absolute continence is possible in married life. Marriage being a sacrament according to Hindu seers, there is room in it for one or two offsprings and that is why in our Shastras the first offspring is described as Dharmaja (born of Dharma), all subsequent issues being referred to as Kamaja (born of lust). Bhagawan Manu says that the issue who is born after prayers and penances for the betterment of the race is an Arya and others are non-Aryas. The most illustrious example of such an attempt in European History is perhaps afforded by Ezenobia, the Queen of Palmyra, equally renowned for her beauty and valour, about whom Gibbon has observed: "She never admitted her husband's embraces but for the sake of posterity. If her hopes were baffled, in the ensuing month she reiterated the experiment." Spinsters among us are practically unknown now, except some nun here and there who leave no impression on the social life of the country, whereas in Europe thousands claim celibacy as a common virtue.

"Man can make a vow of chastity," says Montegazza. "Those who are capable of psychical chastity," remarks Fere, "are capable of a vow of continence." "Serious minds consider" observes Mirachi, "religious abstinence as infinitely more common than some peo-

ple suppose." At all times and in all countries men are found who profess absolute continence: among the Greeks, the Pythagoreans; among the Jews, the Essenes.

PROCREATION HASTENS DEATH

William Loftus Hare, writing in **'The Open Court'** (Chicago) in March, 1926 on "Generation and Regeneration," gave convincing arguments regarding the biological necessity of continence. He pointed out that the undifferentiated germ-cells of the body are performing two functions simultaneously; namely, the internal reproduction or regeneration for the building up of the body and external reproduction or generation for the continuation of the species. He proves with biological facts and figures that the regenerative process is fundamental for the individual and therefore necessary and primary, whereas the generative process is due to the superfluity of cells and is therefore secondary. Both are closely dependent on nourishment and if this be low there is deficiency of both the processes. Mr. W. L. Hare then adds, "Law of life at this level is to feed the germ-cells firstly for regeneration and secondly for generation. In case of deficiency which is a very common feature in modern men and women, regeneration must take the first place and generation be suspended. Thus we may learn the origin of the suspension of reproduction and follow it to its later phases of human continence and asceticism generally. Inner reproduction can never be suspended even at the cost of disease and death. Every moment of growth from conception onwards exhibits this increasing power of regeneration. If regeneration ceases or is imperfectly

performed, disease or death will supervene. The nemesis of reproduction is death and the sexual act is essentially katabolic in the male and in the parturition of the offspring it is katabolic for the female." Hence the insightful writer contends that virility and vitality and immunity from disease are the normal lot of nearly or quite continent persons and a proof of this, if a rather unpleasant one, is derived from the fact that a very large number of diseases in men have been and are cured by the artificial injection of semen of debilitated persons. Patrick Geddes writes in his **The Evolution of Sex** that the association of reproduction and death is indeed patent enough but connection in popular language is usually misstated. The true statement, as far as history furnishes an answer, is not that animals reproduce because they have to die but that they die because they have to reproduce. In support of this view Goethe, the great German thinker, says that it is not death that makes reproduction necessary but reproduction has death as its inevitable consequence. From the physiological point of view, when physical creation is stopped, the way to intellectual creation is open and when intellectual creation is suspended, spiritual creation or religious experience is possible.

Zoologists tell us continence is observed by lower animals, as for instance, cattle, to a greater extent than by human beings and this is a fact. The reason is that the cattle have perfect control over the palate not by will but by instinct. They subsist on mere fodder and of this too they take a quantity just sufficient for nutrition. J. Biberg, a Latin writer, says that the organs of generation in the animal kingdom are for the most part concealed by nature, as if they were

to be ashamed of them. Khan Saheb Abdul Gaffar Khan of the Frontier Province once remarked to Mahatma Gandhi that observance of continence was really natural to the tribesmen who were so habituated to continence outside marriage. The secret of their well-known hardiness and strength lies as much in their chaste lives as in their open-air life and invigorating climate. They marry, both men and women, after full maturity. Unfaithfulness, adultery or unmarried love are practically unknown among them. To them union outside wedlock is punishable by death. The injured party has the right to take the life of the wrong-doer.

MARTIN LUTHER'S AVERSION TO CONTINENCE

Martin Luther alone of all religious leaders maintained that it was no more possible to keep the vow of chastity than to cast off one's sex. Luther, the founder of Protestanism, who was the great enemy of ecclesiastical celibacy, was compelled logically to permit polygamy and polyandry. Among the great religions Protestanism alone has shown itself hostile to asceticism and this hostility, observes Schopenhauer, is absolutely incompatible with fundamental essentials of an intellectual religion. From this standpoint Protestanism will be forced to change its position or to perish. Foerster, the profound analyst of human nature, remarks that the people themselves demanded a religious basis higher than the world. It has nothing to say to a form of habit which leaves it too close to the level of its natural and ordinary life. All the great religions have always set before believers an ideal of asceticism and the conquest of lower nature

and it is just so far as they have taught men to rise above lower nature to self-liberation that they have arrested their minds, influenced their wills and filled their hearts with generous enthusiasm.

So long as Roman paganism was a living religion, it surrounded with a mystical reverence the vestals whose immaculate chastity pleased the gods. All the efforts at ecclesiastical reform attempted during the last century among the Protestant Churches of the United States and Great Britain have resulted in an ever-increasing appreciation of the religious value of celibacy. The Catholic Church from her first days has asserted the pre-eminence of religious celibacy, and has taught her votaries to esteem the social value of virginity and perpetual celibacy.

That sexual abstinence is absolutely necessary for religious progress is the verdict of the spiritual giants of humanity, because spiritual practice causes a great strain on the nerves and the brain. Nervous system and brain which are impaired by incontinence are too weak to bear that tremendous strain. They will give way before a high spiritual impulse, and the result will be total collapse and incurable disease. Besides, the perceptions of higher phases of spiritual verities require the activity of very sensitive and subtle nerves. Without continence they die and become inoperative. Higher spiritual experiences are impossible for people who are incontinent. That is why continence, in some form or other, has been looked upon as the basis of spiritual life by all spiritual systems of the world without exception.

PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF CONTINENCE

According to medical science healthy sexual

glands insure physical vigour and long life. When these glands function properly, they give out an internal secretion which stimulates and strengthens the organic tissues, specially the brain cells and spinal cord. Celibate life practically demonstrates that continence can keep these glands most healthy and active. Margaret Sanger, the pioneer of birth-control movement in America, and Dr. Mcsuttan, an American physician, after discussing with Sri Yogendra, the author of **Yoga as Personal Hygiene,** Bombay, frankly admitted that, if practicable, the Yogic method of active continence is the most ideal solution of all the important questions of birth-control. In the contraceptive section of the International Birth-control Conference held in London in 1922 and attended by 164 members of the medical profession, a resolution was passed with three dissentients that there was no evidence that the best contraceptive methods were injurious to health or conducive to sterility. This resolution exposes the short-sightedness of the observation of these sexual-minded medical men. But many leading doctors and scientists belonging to the American Social Hygiene Association hold that sex-control is beneficial. Dr. Alexis Carrel agrees that sex-control is harmful except to those who feed their passions and are already unbalanced. Mahatma Gandhi rightly says: "Sexual act for the purpose of carnal satisfaction is reversion to animality and it should be therefore man's endeavour to rise above it. Man is superior to the brute in as much as he is capable of self-restraint of which the brute is incapable. Self-indulgence cannot be the law of life as some advocates of contraceptives hold except to the idiots and imbeciles. Passions are never extinguished by satia-

tion." Mr. C. E. M. Joad rightly says: "If you make sense-pleasure the ideal of your life, a time will come when nothing will any more please you". It is described in Adi Parva (73rd chapter), the Mahabharata, that King Yayati took the youth of his son Puru and enjoyed for about a thousand years but found to his bewilderment that the passions were not gratified and were increasing like wild fire. He then said to his son:

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥
यत्पृथिव्यां व्रीहियवं हिरण्यं पशवःस्त्रिय : ।
एकस्यापि न पर्याप्तं तस्मात्तृष्णां परित्यजेत् ॥

Lust is never gratified by enjoyment. Enjoyment increases the passion as ghee (clarified butter) poured upon fire increases the latter by leaps and bounds. All the corns, gold, animals and women that are on earth cannot gratify even one mind. Give up therefore desires which are quenched not by enjoyment but by elimination. Mahatma Gandhi asserts that birth-control by contraceptives is race suicide. Resort to artificial methods is like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless. Self-control is the surest and only method of regulating the birth-rate because it promotes the well-being of individuals as well as of society. "Most cases of irritability and hysteria and even insanity", observes Gandhiji, "which are wrongly ascribed to attempts at continence will, in truth, be found traceable to the incontinence of the other senses."

Experimental evidence of modern science which goes against absolute continence is correct only when celibacy is enforced on brutish people. Such people

cannot eliminate sexual impulse and so it poisons their system, deteriorates their sexual glands, and brings on premature senility. It is also true that married life led with moderation and restraint prolongs life and guarantees health. Undoubtedly this is the way suitable for the majority. But there are Yogic methods which increase the absorbing power of the lymphatic vessels and thereby prevent accumulation of internal secretion of sexual glands and thus avoid its so-called evil consequences. Swami Kuvalayananda of Bombay has experimentally demonstrated that Yogic postures and exercises such as Siddasana, Sarvangasana and Goraksasana (see Appendix I) can perform such miracles. There are, at least, a handful of people free from all sexual urges who are evidently fit for total abstinence and it is they who experience its creative power. The real point at issue in the case of continence is, in the language of psycho-analysis, sublimation. Thousands of other ways of successfully tackling the problem of sublimation have been invented by the religionists of all countries. All, except a queer and quixotic minority, admit that the more we practise continence the better is our physical and mental health. The more we yield to sexual impulses, the more we ruin our life and health.

HINDU SCRIPTURES ON BRAHMACHARYA

Rishi Patanjali says "वीर्य्यधारणं ब्रह्मचर्यम्" or Brahmacharya (continence) literally means Viryadharana or conservation of sexual energy and retention of semen. Sri Yajnavalkya says:

कर्मणा मनसा वाचा सर्वावस्थासु सर्वदा ।
सर्वत्र मैथुनत्यागो ब्रह्मचर्यं प्रचक्षते ॥

That is: Brahmacharya or continence means abstain-

ing from sexual enjoyment in thought, word and deed in all conditions, in all places, in all times. In the opinion of Dr. Dio Louis, all eminent physiologists agree that the most precious atoms of the blood enter into the composition of semen. He further adds that the conservation of this element is essential to strength of body, vigour of mind and keenness of intellect.

Dr. E. P. Miller writes, "All waste of spermatic secretions whether voluntary or involuntary is a direct waste of life-force. It is almost universally conceded that the choicest element of the blood enters into the composition of the spermatic secretion. It follows from this that a chaste life is essential to man's well-being. According to the Hindu medical science (Ayurveda), human body is made up of seven Dhatus (elements) such as Rasa (chyle), Rakta (blood), Mansa (flesh), Meda (fat), Asthi (bone), Majja (marrow), and Sukra (semen). According to Ayurveda —

एते सप्त स्वयं स्थित्वा देहं दधति यन्नृणाम् ।
रसासृङ्मांसमेदोऽस्थिमज्जाशुक्राणि धातव: ॥

That is: The seven dhatus such as Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja and Sukra are so called because they by their very presence sustain the human body. Rishi Sushruta says:

रसाद्रक्तं ततो मांसं मांसान्मेद: प्रजायते ।
मेदसऽस्थिततो मज्जा, मज्ज: शुक्रस्य सम्भव: ॥

That is: Out of food chyle is manufactured, from chyle blood, from blood flesh, from flesh fat, from fat bones, from bones marrow, and lastly from marrow semen. So semen is the finest of the seven elements

of the human system. It is the essence of essences. The food we eat, the Ayurvedic physicians hold, takes five days to be digested and turned into chyle; chyle takes five days to be converted into blood; blood takes five days to become flesh; flesh takes five days to become fat; fat takes five days to become bone; bone takes five days to become marrow; and marrow takes five days to become semen. The food therefore eaten by us is generally drawn into semen in the course of 35 days after digestion. One drop of semen, say the Ayurvedic texts, is made from sixty drops of blood. It is said in our scriptures:

शुक्रं सौम्यं सितं स्निग्धं बलपुष्टिकरं स्मृतम् ।
गर्भबीजं वपुसारो जीवनाश्रय: उत्तम : ॥

That is: Sukra (semen) is calm, white, cool, giver of strength, builder of body, seed of procreation, essence of the body, and the chief stay of life.

यथा पयसि सर्पिस्तु गुडश्चेक्षुरसे यथा ।
एवं हि सकले काये शुक्रं तिष्ठति देहिनाम् ॥

That is: As the ghee is pervasive in milk and molasses in sugarcane juice, so the semen pervades the body of the human beings.

The two testes that are located in the scrotal bag are called secretory glands. The cells of the testes are endowed with the peculiar property of secreting semen from the blood. Just as bees collect honey in the honey-comb drop by drop, so also the cells of the testes gather semen drop by drop from the blood. The seminal fluid is taken by two ducts or tubes to the vesiculae seminalis. Under excitement it is thrown out by special ducts, called ejaculatory ducts, into the urethra where it is mixed with the prostatic juice and

goes out. In wet dream it may be outflow of prostatic juice only. The spermatic secretion in men is continuous; it must either be reabsorbed into or expelled from the system. Prof. Gurudas Gupta, M.A. in his Bengali book on Student Life gives the following description of how semen is prepared and preserved in the body: The blood-current is very slow in the testicles which retain many substances from the blood and produce what is known as semen. There are in the testicles many fine tubes that join together and form a big tube which is the passage for semen. This big tube is long enough and spreads from the rectum to the abdomen and enters the urethra. Before entering into the bladder the big tube expands and joins a bag in which semen is stored; the bag is situated very close to the rectum and the bladder. Before being joined with the bladder the big tube has become very pointed and is like a rubber with power of contraction and expansion. But naturally it remains contracted and does not allow the semen to go out. When the seminal vesicles are contracted, the end of the big tube expands and vice versa. The more the end of the big tube is tight, the more one can retain semen. Semen is always produced drop by drop in the testicles and passing through the big tube is preserved in the bag; but as the bladder is closed by the end of the big tube, semen cannot enter into the bladder. By excitement semen while coming out of the testicles goes through the urethra without entering into the bag. When there is no need for going out it is stored in the bag. When the bag is full, it percolates through the small pores of the bag and mixes with the blood. At that time it looks like white cells of the blood. They are so subtle that they cannot be seen separate in the

blood even by means of the microscope like the white corpuscles of the blood which have the power of preventing disease, recouping wounds, cuts, bruises and creating new flesh, etc. That is why the more one can retain this substance in the blood the more is one away from disease. That is why a Brahmachari does not fall a victim to disease and even if he falls ill he recovers sooner than incontinent persons. Semen after being mixed with blood again comes back to the testicles and with other new materials turns into stronger and dearer semen. This new substance passing through the big tube enters the bag again. In course of time it goes to the blood again when the blood is more vitalised. Again it comes to the testicles and is converted into still stronger and purer semen. If the semen is not lost it becomes gradually stronger and stronger and strengthens the mind and body. When semen is seen through a microscope it is found surrounded by an infinite number of protoplasmic cells like tiny tadpoles which are nothing but albumen. This albumen strengthens the nervous system and when it is lost our nervous system becomes weak. What is called excitement is nothing but the agitation of the nervous system. So we should not think such thoughts or do such deeds as may in any way excite our nervous system.

The bladder, stomach and the bag of semen are placed together closely. If one swells, there is possibility of the outgoing of semen. That is why we should not put off our calls of nature, i.e., passing urine and stool. If in the morning, three hours after midday meal and in the afternoon we drink water our system will be flushed. Retention of semen creates the eighth Dhatu called Ojas in our body. Ojas is

what is called by the Westerners human magnetism. Ojas is the spiritual force and true builder of personality. The Bhagabata says:

ओजश्च तेजो धातूनां शुक्रान्तानां परं स्मृतम् ।
हृदयस्थमपि व्यापि देहस्थितिनिबन्धनम् ॥
यस्य प्रवृद्धौ देहस्य तुष्टिपुष्टिबलोदया: ।
यन्नाशे नियतो नाशो यस्मिंस्तिष्ठति जीवनम् ॥
निष्पाद्यन्ते यतो भावा विविधा देहसंश्रया: ।
उत्साहप्रतिभाधैर्यलावण्यसुकुमारता: ॥

That is: The essence of the seven dhatus from Rasa to Shukra is known as Ojas which though pervading the whole body lies mainly in the heart. Cheerfulness, development, and strength of the body depends on the growth of ojas; its absence leads to death. It is the main prop of life. Enthusiasm, merit, patience, grace and beauty and other attributes pertaining to the body are born of this substance called Ojas.

Rishi Sushruta says:

रसादीनां शुक्रान्तानां धातूनां यत्परं तेज: तत्खल्वोजसस्तदेव बलमिति ।

That is: The best essence of the seven dhatus from Rasa to Shukra is verily the Ojas, that is power.

Sharangadhar says:

ओज: सर्वशरीरस्थं स्निग्धं शीतं स्थिरं सितम् ।
सोमात्मकं शरीरस्य बलपुष्टिकरं मतम् ॥

That is: Ojas pervades the whole body and is soothing, cool, steady, white and soma-like and is very conducive to the strength and development of the body.

From this it is perfectly clear that semen is the most precious substance in human system. That is why it is said in the Shivasamhita:

मरणं विन्दुपातेन जीवनं विन्दुधारणात् ।
तस्मादतिप्रयत्नेन क्रियतां विन्दुधारणम् ॥

In other words retention of semen is life; its loss is death; we should therefore endeavour our level best to conserve every drop of this precious substance. Guru Dattatreya says:

यदि संगं करोत्येव विन्दुस्तस्य विनश्यति ।
आत्मक्षयो विन्दुहानात् असामर्थ्यञ्च जायते ॥

Or: By a sexual act semen is lost and by the loss of semen life is wasted and incapability grows.

Rightly it has been said by the wise that chastity is life and continence is heaven; but sexuality is death and lust leads to hell. Our scriptures designate Brahmacharya as the 'great vow of ordinance' — Mahavrata, because of its unsurpassed benefits and because of difficulty of achieving perfection in it. One student of Dhanwantari, the father of Ayurveda, approached him after completing his full course of Ayurveda under him and said, "Bhagavan, teach me the secret of health". Dhanwantari replied, "Shukra (semen) is verily Atman (soul). The secret of health lies in preserving this vital fluid. He who wastes this energy will have no development, physical, moral and mental." Lord Siva says in Jnana-Sankalini Tantra:

न तपस्तप इत्याहुः ब्रह्मचर्यं तपोत्तमम् ।
ऊर्ध्वरेता भवेद् यस्तु स देवो नतु मानुषः ॥

That is: Torturing the body is no austerity. Continence is the best austerity. A man of unbroken continence is not a man, but a god. Lord Siva Himself says:

सिद्धे विन्दौ महारत्ने किं न सिध्यति भूतले ।
यस्य प्रसादान्महिमा ममाप्येतादृशोऽभवत् ॥

Or: what is there in this world that cannot be achieved, when one preserves this jewel of semen, by whose power I have so much glory in the whole universe.

Sri Ramakrishna says: "He who can give up the sex-idea can spurn at the world." ब्रह्मचर्य प्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः says Patanjali Rishi, i.e., continence being established, strength of body and vigour of mind is gained. It is said in our scriptures that continence is the negation of eight kinds of sexuality described in the following verses:

श्रवणं कीर्तनं केलि प्रेक्षणं गुह्यभाषणम् ।
सङ्कल्पोऽध्यवसायश्च क्रियानिष्पत्तिरेवच ॥
एतन्मैथुनमष्टाङ्गं प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः ।
विपरीतं ब्रह्मचर्यं मनुष्ठेयं मुमुक्षुभिः ॥

That is: Thinking, hearing and talking of the sex; playing with, looking at, and conversing with opposite sex in secret; attempting at, and finally the performance of, the sexual act; these are the eight kinds of sexuality according to the wise. Continence, which is not doing any of these, should be practised by those who want self-mastery.

To harbour impure thoughts in the mind is a kind of incontinence. Christ rightly says: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. V. 28).

POWER OF LUST

How powerful is lust and how hard to conquer lust and how difficult it is to eradicate it is well illustrated by the following narrative. In spite of our constant vigilance and circumspection, one cannot say

when he will fall a victim to lust. The young aspirants should never be certain of the conquest of lust. Once upon a time Vyasadeva in the course of his discourse to his students observed that Brahmacharins should very carefully avoid the contact of women, even of virgins (Bramacharinis). At this Jaimini, the author of Purva Mimansa, told Vyasa that he was so well-established in continence that no object of temptation, nor even a young woman could attract him. Vyasa, however, warned him not to be over-confident in this slippery path of continence and advised him to be more vigilant. After some time the Muni told his disciples that he was going on a pilgrimage and would return after some months. On leaving his hermitage, he assumed the form of an exquisitely beautiful woman with charming face and piercing eyes. The woman was standing under a tree at dusk, when the sky became covered with dark clouds and rains began to fall. Jaimini happened to pass by that way and seeing the girl helpless felt pity on her and said to her, "Dear sister, you may come to my hermitage close by and take shelter there for the night." On enquiry when she came to know from Jaimini that he was alone in the hermitage and there was no lady, she told him that it was not proper for her, a young virgin, to spend a night with a Brahmachari. But when Jaimini assured her that he was firmly seated in continence and she had no fear from him, she agreed and went to the hermitage. The woman lay inside and Jaimini outside the room. At the dead of night lust stole into the mind of Jaimini who then on the plea of bad weather went inside the room and lay there. At last he was overcome with lust and was about to embrace the lady when Vyasa reassumed his original

form and scolded his disciple for false vanity and pride. It is wellnigh impossible to eradicate lust and those who surrender to God and protect themselves by intense prayer and meditation and good company can alone escape. To look upon women as mothers or different human forms of divinity is a very effective way of getting rid of lust. Bhagavan Sri Krishna tells in the Gita (16-21) that lust is the strongest passion and the worst enemy of man. It is indeed very difficult to control it. Sri Krishna says in the Gita again that he who can control the impulse of lust can alone be happy and prosperous. Bhartrihari, author of "Vairagya Shatak" says: "Once a day I take that tasteless food which I get by begging; I use the earth as bed; the body is my only attendant, and a worn-out blanket with patches all over is my dress; but alas ! lust does not leave me." Jerome writes to the virgin Eustochium about his struggle for abstinence and the power of lust: "Oh! how many times when in the desert, in that vast solitude which burnt by the heat of the sun offers but a horrible dwelling to monks, I imagined among the delights of Rome; I was done. My limbs were covered by a wretched sack, and my skin was as black as an Ethiopian's. Every day I wept and groaned, and if I was unwillingly overcome by sleep, my lean body lay on the bare earth. I say nothing of my food and drink, for in the desert even the invalids have no drink but cold water. Well, I who out of fear for hell, had condemned myself to this prison, companion of scorpion and wild beasts, often seemed in imagination among a band of girls. My face was pale with fasting and my mind within my frigid body was burning with desire; the fires of lust would still flame up in a body that

already seemed to be dead".

MEANS OF ATTAINING PERFECT CONTINENCE

A bachelor once said to Sir M. Visvesvarayya, ex-Dewan of the Mysore State, a great genius and a life-long celibate, "Sir, I am a bachelor from choice but lately have shown some signs of wavering. How to keep up my celibacy?" "Keep your love in cold-storage for a few more years" was the instant answer of the knight. Once I asked a great saint: What is continence? I expected that his reply would consist of some moral rules and regulations. But, to my surprise, he said: "Keep your mind as simple, innocent, pure and unattached as that of a child; and that is continence." And the same great soul was again asked by me the question: how to conquer lust, to which he replied: "Continence means absence of lust. You cannot conquer lust, for it is the finest form of energy. Energy cannot be destroyed; this is proved by science. You have got to forget lust; you have to re-direct, transcend and transform it. Love love, love culture, love knowledge. This is the best way to forget lust. One of the best methods of controlling lust and observing continence is the love of knowledge. Mahomad says — "The acquisition of knowledge is the duty of every Muslim male or female. Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. Excessive knowledge is better than excessive prayer. The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr."

Sri Aurovindo observes in his "Bases of Yoga" as follows: "The contrary opinion (about continence) may be due to the idea that sex is a natural part of the human vital physical whole, a necessity like food and sleep and that its total inhibition may lead to

unbalancing and to serious disorders. It is a fact that sex suppressed in outward action but indulged in other ways may lead to disorders of the system and brain troubles. That is the root of the medical theory which discourages sexual abstinence. But I have observed that these things happen only when there is either secret indulgence of a perverse kind of subtle vital way by imagination or by an invisible vital interchange of an occult kind. I do not think harm ever occurs when there is a true spiritual effort at mastery and abstinence. It is now held by many medical men in Europe that sexual abstinence, if it is genuine, is beneficial; for the element in the retas which feeds the energies of the system mental, vital and physical and that justifies the Indian idea of Brahmacharya, the transformation of retas into ojas and the raising of its energies upward so that they may change into a spiritual force."

In another place of his book Sri Aurovindo remarks, "As to sexual impulse regard it not as something sinful and horrible and attractive at the same time but as mistake and wrong movement of the lower nature. Reject it entirely not by struggling with it, but by drawing back from it, detaching yourself and refusing your consent; look at it as something not your own but imposed on you by a force of nature outside you. Refuse all consent to the imposition. If anything in your vital consents, insist on that part of your withdrawing its consent. Call in the Divine Force to help you in your withdrawal and refusal. If you can do this quietly and resolutely and patiently, in the end your inner will will prevail against the habit of outer nature."

"The Sadhaka (aspirant) has to turn away

entirely from the invasion of the vital and the physical by the sex-impulse; for if he does not conquer the sex-impulse, there can be no settling in the body of the divine consciousness, and the divine Ananda. It is true that mere suppression or holding down of desire is not enough, not by itself truly effective, but that does not mean that desires are to be indulged; it means that desires have not merely to be suppressed but rejected from the nature. In place of desire, there must be a single-minded aspiration towards the Divine.

As for love, the love must be turned singly towards the Divine. What men call by that name is a vital interchange for mutual satisfaction of desire, vital impulse or physical pleasure. It has to be said that the total elimination of the sex impulse is one of the most difficult means in Sadhana and one must be prepared for it to take time. But its total disappearance has been achieved, and a practical liberation crossed, only by occasional dream-movements from the sub-conscient.

Lilly Heber records in her "Krishnamurti and the world crisis" the following interesting observations on continence made by J. Krishnamurti, an international leader of Theosophical Society. Sri Krishnamurti said, "I was asked the other day why I did not marry. I will give you the reason. I am not against marriage. Marriage — that which society calls marriage — is brought about because men and women are lonely. Now if you surmount all loneliness you need not marry. You are everything. You are no longer lonely. You no longer need support, encouragement, the lesson of constant adjustment to the point of view of another. The purpose of marriage is to make an effort together, man and woman, to grow, to adjust, to

understand, to develop various qualities. But if you are in love with life itself, in which is the expression both of man and woman, then you are adjusting yourself to that totality all the time, and you are beyond the need for the experience of constant adjustment of points of view. Then you need not marry. But don't deceive yourselves."

To a question "Can a married person who is living a normal sex life achieve the supreme goal? Is the ascetic life which we assume to be your mode of living, essential to achievement?" Sri Krishnamurti, an ethical teacher of world-fame, answers: "The realization of Truth is the consummation of energy. To reach that consummation, energy must be concentrated in deep contemplation which is the natural result of action, the right judgment of values. I lead what you call an ascetic life because of this concentration of energy, which is the freedom of self-consciousness. I am not saying that you should imitate me. I do not say that you cannot realize this contemplation because you are married. But a man who desires the realization of completeness wholly, permanently, must have all his energy concentrated."

"A man who is a slave to passion, to lust, to sensation cannot realize this....."

Sri Krishnamurti continued: "The fact is that pure emotion is detached from its own objects. If I love someone truly, deeply, then I am detached, for true love is in itself complete. What passes by the name of love is but empty emotion, and depends on another for its very existence. If affection is bound up with the individual, it must be limited. If you cling to another for your happiness, you are all the time afraid to lose him, either through death or through his

affection being transferred to another."

"Personal love, with its possessiveness, its fears, its jealousies, its demands, inevitably creates a barrier between itself and the object of its love." Here we are facing the ever-recurring tragedy of personal love: "The pain of love in all its forms is created by this barrier, whereas true love which is complete in itself, is free from all sorrow." To another question: "Is the physical expression of sexual love a limitation of love and life? If so, how may we get rid of it?" Sri Krishnamurti remarked: "If you are a slave to sensation if you are attached for your happiness, to this satisfaction, to this sensation —then it is a limitation of love and life..... A man who would be free of delusion and craving must have perfect control of the body—control through understanding, not through suppression or repression. Control comes with the desire for the understanding of the purpose of individual existence and its fulfilment. Most people suppress their desires through fear; but this is not control, it is death. True control is suppleness, activity, the body being fully active but under restraint....."

" I use the word control as self-imposed discipline with understanding — not the stupid control which leaves you bitter, hard, cruel, ruthless. Self-imposed discipline is full of kindness, thoughtfulness, is tender and not harsh....."

"When you understand desire, whence it springs and whither it is going, desire becomes a precious jewel .... Such desire is the source of true discipline—not set discipline, but discipline that varies progressively until you arrive at pure being."

" The whole problem of sexuality has its root in the "I" consciousness. While the "I" consciousness

exists, the "opposites" of existence will have free play, and there will be attraction and repulsion between men." "Passion will exist so long as both men and women are bound by the sorrow of incompleteness."

Swami Ashokananda in his **Spiritual Practice** (p.p. 130-140) gives some useful advice for the practice of continence. He says that continence which concerns equally the married and the unmarried has been differently interpreted and doubtless it has very many implications. But its simple and essential meaning is abstention from sexual thought and deed in every form. Sexual act, the grossest form of sexuality, is of course to be given up entirely. But persistence in the practice of continence reveals the fact that this gross form is the expression of the inner impulse. The control and eradication of these impulses is the main thing. Without that, mere outer abstention avails little. Sex-consciousness is deeply rooted in our minds. It may almost be said to be contemporaneous with the very beginning of the individual life. The philosophers observed long ago that there exists an intimate relation between sexual activity and imagination. The sexual emotion stirs our psychological being, troubles the senses and infatuates reason. The less one experiences the emotion, the better is his well-being. "Have we said everything as to the sexual emotion," writes M. Ruyssen, "when we have traced the eddy which it excites on the surface of our consciousness? Have we not on the contrary the deep impression that something else is stirring far below, that our inmost self is moved by a force at once close to us and yet stretching infinitely beyond us ? "

The idea of body is in a sense the prop of the sexual consciousness. Therefore Sri Ramakrishna said that until a man has realised God he cannot completely rid himself of lust. One day Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna was asked by one of his young disciples —'Sir, how to conquer lust? I am trying my best to control my mind and eliminate evil thoughts but they come in spite of all these and destroy my peace of mind.' Sri Ramakrishna said to him—"Lust does not leave us finally before God-vision. Even after God-vision it remains in some form or other in of course very small measure as long as the body lasts; but then it cannot raise its head. Do you think lust has left me altogether ? Once I thought that I had conquered lust. I was then sitting in the Panchavati Grove. Just then a torrent of lust arose in my mind and was about to overtake me when I fell on the ground and began to rub my face against the earth and prayed to the Divine Mother saying," I have done wrong. Save me this time, O Mother! I will never think in future that I have conquered lust." Then it subsided through the divine grace. The fact is that the tide of overflowing youth has come, so you find it difficult to stay it. When the flood comes, all rice fields become full of water. But in the Kali Yuga mental sins are not to be counted as sins. If once a while an evil thought comes to the mind, do not be dejected. These are like excretions of the body and are physiologically natural to the physical system. After passing stool or urine nobody thinks what he has done. If once a while an impure thought crosses the mind, do not attach any importance to it. Gradually it will subside." To Swami Yogananda, a disciple when he was 14 or 15 years of age, Sri Ramakrishna

said in reply to his question 'how to conquer lust'—"Repeat the name of the Lord by clapping your hands morning and evening." Mahatma Gandhi also testifies that the repetition of God's name drives away all evil thoughts from the mind.

To recognise sexual difference in men and women is a kind of sexuality. When one has completely eliminated lust one will not feel that difference. Only the soul will be apparent, existing in all, beyond all distinctions of sex and body. Continence has all these wide significances among its implications. But of course in the beginning one cannot rise to such heights but must begin on the lower plane. Nevertheless, the goal should never be lost sight of.

Without effort continence can never be successfully practised. The aspirant will have to win every inch of the ardous uphill way with great struggle which will bring in return benefits in abundance. A yearning for spiritual life is the primary condition of the practice of continence. The secret is to forget the body. It is often found that being intent on the practice of continence too much attention is paid to small physiological details and the details of food and living. There is too much consciousness of the practice of continence. This ultra-awareness is psychologically harmful and in the long run impedes the success. The more we dwell on sexuality whether with the desire of indulging or checking it, the less shall we succeed in getting rid of it. To forget it is the best and safest way to its conquest.

Early rising, early going to bed, daily physical exercise or games, constant cheerfulness and such other healthy habits are very helpful for continence. But they should not become obsessions. It is said

in the Shastras:

ब्राह्ममुहूर्ते बुध्येत धर्मार्थौ चानुचिन्तयेत्

i.e., get up from the bed in the last quarter of the night and devote yourself to the practice of religion and other things which are not opposed to religion. Those who want to get up very early in the morning should make their night meals very light. Physical exercise should be taken fully in winter, partly in rains and stopped in summer. Exercise in the morning and walking or games in the evening is good. Over-exercise is as bad as no exercise. By over-exercise breathing becomes fast and frequent; and oxygen cannot stay inside the system sufficiently long to be mixed with the blood. This leads to oxygen-starvation which is fatal to health. Over-exercised persons have short life. Hence football, hockey and other games that cause over-exercise should be abandoned. Popular oriental games and sports are quite scientific in spirit and artistic in form. Regular exercise keeps the blood pure and system fit. Fast breathing due to measured exercise oxygenates the blood and thereby purifies it and promotes its circulation. Blood circulation keeps the limbs healthy. Exercise should be taken according to half the strength of oneself. When one's forehead, armpits and lips begin to perspire, exercise is then half the strength and should be stopped. Take sufficient rest and then bathe. Prof. Blackie rightly observes that a regular bath in the morning has always an invigorating effect.

We must avoid contact with men or things that are reminiscent of sexuality. It is very urgent that we should give up the company of those who indulge in sexuality. As the sun always radiates heat, flower its

fragrance and dead body a bad smell, so the impure persons give out an aura of impurity which is very contagious. Hence it is best to avoid sitting or sleeping with such persons as far as practicable. The world is full of temptations and distractions. Hence an aspirant of continence should live with strict care and caution. He should move in the society as Sukhadev, Vyasa's son, walked in the streets of Mithila with a pot brimful of water on his head at the instruction of King Janaka. In the streets there were dance and music of young women, and a lot of other distractions. Sukhadev did not care to notice any of these distractions and returned to the palace of Janaka without spilling a drop of water from the pot. Unless we practice callous indifference to objects of temptations, we will be carried away by them.

Get up in the morning at least one hour before sun-rise. According to 'Ahnika-Tattam' सूर्योदयात् प्राक् अर्धप्रहरे द्वो मुहूर्तौ, तत्राद्य ब्राह्म: ।

That is: Out of 96 minutes before sunrise, first 48 minutes is called Brahmo Muhurta or Holy time. A whole bath at this time is very healthy.

One should bathe daily, says Jabali: नित्यं स्नायात् अनातुर :

i.e., All except the ailing persons should take daily bath. Charaka, the great author of Ayurveda says:

दौर्गन्ध्यं गौरवं तन्द्रां कण्डूमलमरोचकम् ।
स्वेदं वीभत्सतां हन्ति शरीरपरिमार्जनम् ॥
पवित्रं वृष्यमायुष्यं श्रमस्वेदमलापहम् ।
शरीरबलसन्धानं स्नानमोजस्करं परम् ॥

A friction bath taken with cold or lukewarm water removes bad smell, heaviness, drowsiness, itching sensations, loss of hunger, bad perspiration, tiredness

and dirt and on the other hand prolongs life, exhilarates the system, develops strength and gives health.

DIET AND CONTINENCE

Drinking tea, coffee should be given up as they reduce the digesting power and create in the system toxin acid which weakens the heart. Taking snuff, wine and other intoxicants, and smoking tobacco or cigarettes should be given up. Our Shastras say, "Taste not, touch not, smell not, and give not to others that which intoxicates." "Every thing which intoxicates is unlawful" says the Koran (5|92-93). Mahomed says, 'Never drink wine, because it is the root of all evils'. Prof. Blackie observes, "Unnecessary and slippery luxuries such as drink and tobacco, one should never acquire. Honest water never made any man a sinner. He who abstains from liquors and drugs altogether will never die in a ditch and will always have a penny to help himself and his friends in an emergency."

Stale, rotten and adulterated food should be avoided as poison. The 'Manusamhita' says: शुक्तं पर्युषितं चैव परिवर्जयेत् i.e., the dry and stale food should not be taken. According to the Gita (17-10)

यातयामं गतरसं पूतिपर्युषितंच यत् ।
उच्छिष्टं चापि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥

i.e., That which is stale, tasteless, stinking, cooked overnight, refuse and impure is the food liked by the Tamasika. Snuff, cigarette, wine and other intoxicating things should not be used. Bhagwan Buddha instructed his disciples, lay and monastic to take vows of abstaining from intoxicating things.

Do not take any food from the hands of a dis-

eased or corrupted person however intimately related he may be. The Chandogya Upanishad says:

आहारशुद्धौ सत्वशुद्धिः सत्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवा स्मृतिः।
स्मृतिलाभे सर्वग्रन्थीनां विप्रमोक्षः॥

i.e., pure food purifies the mind, pure memory rises in the pure mind, pure memory is the key to Moksha. Do not take remnants of food or drink from anybody, nor give them to others. The Manu Samhita (2-55) says: नोच्छिष्टं कस्यचित् दद्यात्। i.e., the remnants should not be given or taken. Before taking food it is better to wash our feet, hands and face in cold water and take rest. The food should be eaten cheerfully and silently. Talking during eating disturbs chewing and consequently digestion. Silence is golden during meals. Rishi Atri says: महामौनमाश्नियात्। i.e. observe silence during meals. Vyasa Deva also says: मौनमास्थितः अश्नियात्। i.e., take meals in silence. When the mind is excited or agitated food should not be taken. If you get dislike for any food do not put it in the mouth. The Manu Samhita says: पूजयेत् अशनं नित्यम्। i.e., food should be looked upon as sanctified. When disliked food is taken it creates disease. Food should be nicely chewed and swallowed. To eat in hurry is bad health. It is foolish to eat more than what is needed. To overload the stomach is to invite illness. In the Koran (Sura 7) it is said "Allah loveth not those who are guilty of excess." In Sura 20-80 Koran says — "Eat without excess." Mahomed reiterates "Kill not your heart with excess of eating." In fact temperate eating is the secret of health. Says Dr. Rao: "Of recent years science has revealed to us the wonderful interdependence of mind and body in the human organism. Hence intellectual brilliance, nerve-

ous exuberance and mental activity depend to an incredible extent on the soundness and allround development of the body."

It is good to take food at a fixed time daily. Soda, lemonade and other drinks are not healthy. Cool pure water is best for drink. Large quantities of water should not be drunk at meals for they retard digestion by diluting the digestive juice. Drinking water before meals makes the body thin and drinking water at the end of the meals makes the body fat. One should not use napkin, kerchief, bedding cloth, etc. used by others.

It is good for an aspirant to control his tongue as much as possible. He who talks much is liable to tell lies. In the Mahabharata it is said:

"To curb the tongue and moderate the speech
Is held to be the hardest of all tasks.
The words of him who talks too volubly
Have neither substance nor variety.
Without control of tongue and carnal desires
It is impossible to practice continence."

Mahomed says: "No man is true
But who is true in word, deed and thought.
That person is wise and sensible who subdueth his carnal desires;
He is an ignorant man who followeth his lustful appetite."

Says Sir Pardey Lukis—"Dal should be used as a substitute for meat and it is best combined with rice. Again gram with ghee and potatoes is also a complete diet." Dr. Lukis says rain water is best for drinking, next to that is the water of the river or the well. Water does not undergo any chemical change in the stomach, but it helps other things in their chemical

change. Water is conducive to tissue building. One third of the whole weight of the body is water. 80% of brain and tissue is water and 20% of even the bones is water. That is why the Aryans have called water as Life. Water is digested in the large intestines. Daily food should contain the following four substances:

(1) Proteins—nitrogenous compounds, such as milk, gram, peas, dal, etc. This kind of food builds tissue, compensates the wastage of the body, helps oxidization of the seven elements of the system, increases heat in the body and supplies fat.

(2) Fats—such as butter, ghee, oil. This kind of food supplies fat, creates heat and increases energy.

(3) Carbohydrates—Starch, rice, wheat, barley, potato, sugar, fruits and vegetables. This kind of food creates heat and energy.

(4) Salts—Vegetables, fruits and curry. This kind of food produces sodium in saliva and helps digestion; supplies chlorine to the hydrochloric acid in the gastric juice in the stomach and produces blood, builds tissues. There are some foods which are not digested without salts. But eating too much salt is bad, because if its excess does not go out through the kidney, it starts water-logging and dropsical accumulations and creates hydrocele, dropsy and other diseases. People having rheumatic tendencies should take less salt.

Too much culture of softer feelings is bad. We must not sleep too long or too little. The night meal should be spare and we should not go to bed until at least it is half digested, i.e., we should go to bed at least two hours after meals. Whatever solid food we eat should be completely chewed and insalivated for

proper digestion. Indigestion disturbs the equilibrium of Vayu (wind), Pitta (bile), Kapha (phlegm) and Rasa (chyle) and dilutes the semen. The Gita deprecates too much or too little eating for Brahmachari and advises him to avoid excess in everything. Sri Krishna urges that in order to be continent one should be temperate in eating and recreation, in effort for work and in sleep and wakefulness. Yoga-Shastras give a good prescription for eating as follows: "Half the stomach should be filled with food and condiments, one-quarter should be reserved for free movement of air." We should eat to live and not live to eat. Control of the palate is very essential. Our scriptures are of opinion that control of the palate leads to the control of all other senses including sex. Tulsidas says:

काम क्रोध मद लोभ की, जब तक मनमें खान ।
तब तक पण्डितमूरखौ, तुलसी एक समान ॥

As long as lust, anger and greed exist in the mind, the educated and the ignorant are the same. Meditation on death and transitoriness of life is a very effective method of controlling lust. The Manusamhita (2|99) says:

इन्द्रियाणां तु सर्वेषां यद्येकं क्षरतीन्द्रियम् ।
तनास्य क्षरति प्रज्ञा दृतेः पात्रादिवोदकम् ॥

i.e., If any of the sense organs remains uncontrolled, it steals away our prudence, as the water in a pot goes out if there is one leak.

Occasional fasting particularly on the nights of Ekadashi, Purnima and Amavasya are very beneficial to continence. Fasting is a very good help to continence. The great saint Durgacharan Nāg of Bengal

used to take long fasts to control lust. Mahatma Gandhi also says that he has derived infinite benefit from fasting. It is a good habit to repeat Om or any name of god or goddess and glide into sleep at night. We should sleep or take rest either during day or night on the left side, scarcely on the right and never on the back. Cold baths in the morning and evening soothe the nervous system and help us very much to cross the morass of sexuality.

Cleanliness is essential for continence. According to 'Ahnika Tattam':

शौचं तु द्विविधं प्रोक्तं बाह्यमभ्यन्तरं तथा ।
मृज्जलाभ्यां स्मृतं बाह्यं भावशुद्धिस्तथान्तरम् ॥

i.e., There are two kinds of cleanliness external and internal: external cleanliness is by earth and water and the internal or mental purification means purity of thoughts. Both are helpful for continence.

Too much warm clothing should not be used nor should the body be unnecessarily tormented by exposing it to unbearable cold or heat or bone-breaking hardships.

उपानहौ च वासश्च धृतमन्यैर्नधारयेत् i.e., Sandals, shoes and clothings used by others should never be used. एक: शयीत सर्वत्र i.e., One should always sleep alone. We should not sleep covering our head in a cloth. By sleeping thus the erozonous zones of the brain become full with blood. This creates impulse of lust. The best way is to sleep in open air. Our outbreath is poisonous; it should not be inhaled again. Breathing is also to be regulated. According to the Hindu science of breath (see Appendix II), breathing should be through the left nostril at day and through the right one at night. It is said in the 'Manusmriti':

एकः शयीत सर्वत्र न रेतः स्कन्दयेत् क्वचित् ।
कामात् हि स्कन्दयन् रेतो हिनस्ति व्रतमात्मन : ॥
स्वप्ने सिक्त्वा ब्रह्मचारी द्विज : शुक्रमकामत : ।
स्नात्वाकमर्चयित्वा त्रि : पुनर्मामित्यृचं जपेत् ॥

Or: The aspirant of continence should sleep alone in a bed and must never masturbate. He who willingly commits masturbation breaks his vow. If there be wet dreams against his wish, he should take bath in the morning and worship the sun-god and repeat thrice the Rik Mantra: पुनर्मामेतु इन्द्रियं इत्यादि (May the lost power return to me, etc.).

There is no need for perturbation if there are nocturnal emissions. They do not matter much if they happen once or twice a month. Let us press forward in spite of these. By and by, as our mind becomes calm and pure, even the seminal discharges during sleep will become rare. We need not be afraid if night pollutions happen once in a while. There are few fortunate souls in the world who are free from it. It is no use taking medicines or being moody. That brings contrary results. Night pollutions are mostly due to indigestion, constipation and dreamful sleep. Our sleep must be dreamless and peaceful. It is a very good and beneficial practice to observe partial or complete fast on the day after a nocturnal emission praying to and thinking of God. This has a wonderful counter-effect. Nocturnal emissions generally take place in the fourth quarter of the night, i.e., after 3 a.m. One should pass urine and stool as soon as one feels the call of nature. It is a preventive habit to rise between 2 and 4 a.m. and pass urine to keep the bladder empty in the small hours of the morning. Anyway, one should leave the bed at least one hour

before sun-rise and practise concentration and meditation which in our opinion is the best means to observe continence. Constant wearing of **kaupin** day and night checks effectively excitement of the sex organ. Practice of deep rhythmic breathing in the morning, long brisk walk in the evening, daily practice of Siddhasana and Goraksasana are very useful for continence. Breathing exercises and **asanas** etc. should be learnt from the nearest expert. The aspirant should read such books as would fill him with noble thoughts and he should meditate over the lives of great men. The meditation on death and transitoriness of life is a very effective method of controlling lust. The Bhagavat says: अद्य वाद्व शतान्ते वा मृत्युर्वै प्राणिनं ध्रुव : । i.e., Today or after a century death is verily certain of the embodied beings. Think daily that this body will not last for ever—it may die any moment. Thus attachment to body or lust will vanish gradually.

Mahatma Gandhi suggests whenever a youth feels a craving for sexual indulgence he should at once take full or hip bath in cold water so that the heat of the passion may be cooled down and be refined into the energy of the virtuous activity. Paul Brunton in his **Secret Path** says: "If at any time your self-control is threatened by violent passions or disturbing emotions of whatever kind, immediately resort to the practice of rhythmic deep breathing exercise until the danger has passed. It breaks out remarkable effect under such conditions." The renowned German Hydropath, Louis Kuhne, in his book **New Science of Healing** testifies that boys with chronic habits of masturbation have been completely cured of it by Sitz bath (prolonged bath of the genital). That is why Hindus have got a habit of washing the penis

and the testes every time after excretion of urine and stool. All unclean literature should be avoided. The antidote for impure thoughts is pure thoughts. Theatres, cinemas, etc. which tend to stimulate passions should be shunned. All stimulants and exciting foods should be given up. A heart-felt prayer every day for purity makes one progressively pure. German and other Nature-cure practitioners teach that water-treatment of earth-compresses and non-heating fruitarian diet soothe the nervous system and bring the animal passion under easy subjugation whilst they at the same time invigorate the system. Adolf Just in his **Return to Nature** gives some recipes for such treatment. The first and foremost thing in the practice of continence is the realization of its absolute necessity in life and a spiritual view of life and society.

Before sleep it is good to read religious books and think of pure thoughts. These good thoughts will pervade our unconscious mind during sleep. Six hours is the natural measure of sleep. It is stated in our Shastras: प्रहरद्वो शयानोहि ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते । i.e., he who takes six hours of sound sleep is fit for experience of truth. An hour of sleep before midnight is equal to two hours of sleep after midnight.

CONTINENCE IN THE MARRIED

However highly we should esteem the manly resolution of those who voluntarily embrace perpetual celibacy, it is obvious that the path they choose will only be suitable for certain chosen natures, and can only be a very exceptional vocation. Only a microscopic minority may follow the ideal of life-long continence; the rest of the vast majority will have to tread the path of married life. As absolute continence

should be the law of youth before marriage, so continence must be practised as far as practicable in the married life also. "The first moral discipline," remarks M. Paul Bureau, "which society claims from the individual when he reaches adolescence and experiences the solicitations of the sexual instinct in the mysterious depth of his being is that of chastity, the total abstention from every sexual act so long as he remains unmarried. Certainly, no social prescription, all down the ages, is more widely violated; and when we contemplate the innumerable violations, we understand how unreflecting souls have sometimes come to lose the very sense of the obligation." Chastity is obligatory on the married of both the sexes. How could a society maintain itself and prosper in which young men and girls receive public and official instruction on the right of every adult to sexual indulgence, however transient was the occasion or however temporary the relationship. Just think of the evils perpetuated by the idea of Bertrand Russell on marriage. Our young man before marriage gets defiled in imagination, wearied in body, emasculated in moral vigour, but requires from his wife virginal integrity of both body and mind.

For this the young men and women are not to blame; it is due to the moral bankruptcy of modern civilisation in which we are born and brought up. Our civilisation provides, at every step to our youth of both sexes, opportunities and occasions for self-indulgence and sexual excitement which is well-nigh impossible for the untrained minds to check. Neither our educational institutions nor our homes preserve any moral atmosphere and the result is appalling disintegration of moral standards. The unbridled lust

of youth is creating disorder and degeneration in all walks of our collective life. The stage is another place where ideas of pan-sexualism are bred and broadcasted in modern society. "Lasciviousness displays itself to such a degree on the stage of the West," writes a French thinker, "that we are driven to wish that the sexual act might take place on the stage as in the time of the celebrated M. de Chirac." Such condition exists not only in the West but also on the stage of westernised India as well. The growth of licentiousness among young men and women, increase of adultery and divorce, abortion and anti-conceptionist practices are the logical corollary of the contempt for perpetual celibacy professed by too many of our fellow-beings. Every attempt to depreciate perpetual celibacy must, of necessity, be an attack in manifold ways on marriage itself. Hence continence is essential to every rightly regulated married life.

SOCRATES AND CONTINENCE IN THE MARRIED

Socrates, the wisest man of Greece, lived a married life. He was however very emphatic on the strict observance of continence in married life. One of his disciples one day asked him, "Venerable sir, kindly instruct me how many times a householder can visit his legal wife?" Socrates replied, "Only once in his life-time." The disciple said, "My master, this is absolutely impossible for worldly men. Passion is dreadful and troublesome. This world is full of temptations and distractions. Householders have not got strong will to resist temptations. Their senses are very powerful. You are a philosopher; you can control the mind. Pray, prescribe an easier path for

them." Then Socrates said, "A householder can have copulation once in a year." The disciple replied, "O venerable master, this is also a very hard thing for the married men. Kindly instruct still easier method." Socrates then said, "Well, my dear disciple, once in a month. This is quite practicable. I hope you are satisfied now." To this the disciple replied, "Revered teacher, even this is impossible for them. Their minds are overwhelmed with lust. They cannot pass a day without sexual intercourse." Then Socrates said, "Well said, my child, do one thing now. Go straight to the burial ground, dig a grave, purchase a coffin, and the winding sheet for the corpse beforehand. Then spoil yourself as many times as you like. This is my final advice to you." The disciple understood the dire necessity of continence in married life and took a life-long vow of strict celibacy and thus became a favourite disciple of Socrates.

To young people of both sexes who are still too young to marry, perpetual celibacy shows that it is impossible to pass one's life chastely; it recalls to the married the duty to maintain exact discipline in their conjugal relations and never to allow a consideration of self-interest to prevail over the higher demands of moral generosity and loyalty. "In every decent and reasonable married life," observes M. Paul Bureau, "there must reign a certain equilibrium between the fortitude of fidelity and the fortitude of continence. Both are equally indispensable." Sir S. Radhakrishnan, writing in his **Hindu View of Life,** remarks that marriage is not a concession to human weakness but is a means of spiritual growth. Marriage is not the end of the struggle but the beginning of a strenuous life. The institution of marriage is an effective way of

sanctifying one's life. Marriage is regarded by the Hindu scriptures as sacred, the very gods are married. According to the Hindu view of life, personal inclinations and interests in married life should be subordinated to moral intimacy and the vigorous pursuit of the religious ideal. The bridegroom addresses this Vedic mantra to the bride during wedding: तावेहि विवाहावहै सह रेतो दधावहै ॥ Or: May our marital union be firm and both of us try our best to practise continence. Sayanacharya commenting on Rig Veda (V-61-8) writes that the wife and the husband should join and take equal part in all religious works. That is why a wife is called in Sanskrit literature **Sahadharmini** or life's spiritual companion.

Regarded from the sociological point of view, marriage is a social contract, **sui generis,** at once civil and religious, by which persons of different sexes agree to establish between themselves in mutual love and fidelity an intimate relation that shall last through life and even after death in order to promote a superior race. "It may be truly said," remarks Foerster, "the responsibility which religion has laid upon sexual relations between man and woman transforms marriage into a spiritual union by the abnegation of uncontrolled passions which becomes a new capacity for love and devotion."

THE PLACE OF CONTINENCE IN SOCIOLOGY

Sister Nivedita in her **Religion and Dharma** (p. 157) writes: "Brahmacharya is not only for the monk. Nor is it wholly of the body. Abstinence without a great purpose is nothing. It is only the loss of another power. But even Brahmacharya is to be made aggressive. Celibacy is only the passive side of

life that sees human beings actively as minds and souls. Marriage in itself ought to be in the first place a friendship of the mind. Exchange of thought and communion of struggle is far beyond the offering of comfort, and the one need not exclude the other. In Brahmacharya is involved the education of women. For a radiant purity comes to its perfect fruition in thought and knowledge and assimilation of experience and there is Brahmacharya of the wife as well as of the husband."

It is equally incumbent upon the married women also to practise Brahmacharya. Neither wifehood nor motherhood should be their ideal of marriage. President Roosevelt once said that the people whose women are not convinced that there is nothing more beautiful for them than to be good wives and mothers, have a serious reason to be alarmed of the future.

Mahatma Gandhi, Paramahansa Ramakrishna and Saint Durga Charan of Dacca are the brightest examples of perfect continence in married life. "Marriage is meant," testifies Mahatma Gandhi, "to cleanse the hearts of the couple of sordid passions and take them nearer to God. Lustless love between husband and wife is not impossible." "Marriage being a sacrament, it means the union of souls and not of bodies. Marriage which is nothing but restraint is a fence that protects religion." Men and women should be very careful in married life as marriage may "make the body a playground of passions or the temple of self-realisation." The Sage of Sevagram says that he has practised Brahmacharya in a married life for over thirty years with considerable success though living in the midst of activities. The more one overlooks the demands of the flesh or cupid's visitations the

more love is deepened and spiritualised. The married couple may break continence only for the sake of progeny and never for pleasure. But the union is a crime where the desire for progeny is absent. The story of Viswamitra and Vasistha is a good illustration of the principle that sexual act performed solely for the purpose of begetting offspring for the preservation and betterment of the race is not inconsistent with the highest ideals of Brahmacharya in the married life. But the specific limits of prevention should not be transgressed. Rishi Yajnavalkya says:

ऋतावृतौ स्वदारेषु सङ्जतिर्यो विधानतः ।
ब्रह्मचर्यं तदेवोक्तं गृहस्थाश्रमवासिनाम् ॥

Or: That householder who has copulation with his **Dharmapatni** according to scriptural injunctions (i.e. only for progeny and not for enjoyment) at the time of menstruation is also a Brahmachari.

It is said in the Manusmriti:

ऋतुः स्वाभाविकः स्त्रीणां रात्रयः षोडशस्मृतः ।
चतुर्भिरितरैः सार्धमहोभिः सद्विगर्हितैः ॥
तासामाद्याश्चतस्रस्तु निन्दितैकादशी च या ।
त्रयोदशी च शेषास्तु प्रशस्ता दशरात्रयः ॥

Or: The natural period of menstruation for the women is sixteen days after and four days before their menses, which is condemned by the wise. Out of these 16 days, the first four days as well as the eleventh and thirteenth day are bad for intercourse. Apart from these six days the remaining 10 days are suitable for the same. Of these 10 days Pratipad, Sashti, Ashtami, Ekadashi, Dwadashi, Chaturdashi and Purnima tithis and then eclipse, Ramnavami, Sivaratri, Janmastami, Shraddha Day, Samkranti, and Sunday are to be left

out for the same. Out of the remaining days, only two days a month are to be counted for that, and with the consent of the wife and after prayer one may have intercourse. Then he may be called a householder Brahmachari. It is said in the Manusmriti:

निन्द्यास्वष्टासु चान्यासु स्त्रियो रात्रिसु वर्जयन् ।
ब्रह्मचार्येव भवति यत्र तत्राश्रमे वसन् ॥

Or: Leaving the first six and then eight bad nights (in all fourteen nights) he who goes to his wife for only two nights a month, may be called a Brahmachari even though a householder. Mahabharat says:

भार्यां गच्छन् ब्रह्मचारी ऋतौ भवति वै द्विज : ।

Or: A householder who performs sexual act with his wife not more than twice a month during her time of menses may be called a Brahmachari.

The husband should look upon the wife as the embodiment of the divine Mother and the wife also should look upon the husband as the personification of the Ishta Devata, as Sri Ramakrishna and his virgin wife Sharada Devi did respectively. Blinded by lust or caught in the meshes of sensuality the couple should not touch nor look at each other. Continence however does not mean that one should not touch his wife, or sister or any other woman in any circumstances whatsoever. But it does mean that one's state of mind should be as calm and unruffled during such contact as when one touches, say, one's mother or a piece of paper." A man's Brahmacharya," says Gandhiji, "avails nothing if he hesitates in nursing his sister who is ill. But he has to be as free from excitement in case of contact with the fairest damsel on earth as in contact with a dead body."

The main thing is that continence in the married or unmarried is possible by the purification of our conscious and unconscious thoughts. No impure thought should be harboured by the married even in dream, for, an impure thought, or the appearance of any of the six passions such as Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsara is a breach of continence. Impure thoughts dissipate the mental energy whereas pure and properly controlled thoughts generate a power of the highest potency. As steam kept in a leaky pot yields no power, likewise no power is accumulated in the mind in which impure thoughts dissipate energy. An act is materialisation of a thought. If the thoughts are controlled, lust is conquered and continence is established.

Swami Trigunatita affirms that if any one succeeds in the practice of continence, he will feel that what he was so long enjoying was but an infinitesimal part of that ocean of bliss filtering in through one or other of the sense-organs, and that now through every cell of his body he is enjoying the infinite bliss.

CONTINENCE AND THE SOCIETY

Dr. J. D. Unwin's work **Sex and Culture** is a work of the highest importance on this subject. Unwin's conclusions are based upon an enormous wealth of carefully sifted evidence. He opines that all human societies are in one or other of cultural conditions: Zoistic, monistic, deistic, and rationalistic. Of these societies, the Zoistic displays the least amount of mental and social energy, the rationalistic the most. Investigations show that the societies exhibiting the least amount of energy are those where prenuptial continence is not imposed, and where the

opportunities for sexual indulgence in marriage are greatest. The cultural condition of a society rises in exact proportion as it imposes pre-nuptial and post-nuptial restraints upon sexual opportunities.

As the deistic societies insisted on pre-nuptial chastity, conversely all the societies which insisted on pre-nuptial chastity were in the deistic condition. It is the compulsory continence which has caused the thought, reflection and energy of such society.

The group within society which allows the greatest continence displays the greatest energy and dominates the whole society; and the dominating group determines the behaviour of the society as a whole. As long as one stratum of a society at least imposes pre-nuptial continence upon its members and limits post-nuptial sexual opportunity by means of strict monogamy, that society as a whole will behave as a civilised society.

The energy produced by social continence starts as expansive energy and results in the society becoming aggressive. Where the rigorous sexual restraint is inherited by a number of generations, the energy becomes productive i.e. produces higher culture. Where productive energy persists for some time, a factor which Dr. Unwin calls 'human entropy' comes into play. Human entropy is the inherent tendency manifested as soon as suitable social conditions are created towards increased refinement and accuracy. No society can display productive social energy unless a new generation inherits a social system under which sexual opportunity is reduced to a minimum. If such a system be preserved, a richer and yet richer tradition will be created, refined by human entropy.

Sometimes a man has been heard to declare that

he wishes both to enjoy the advantages of high culture and to abolish compulsory continence. The inherent nature of the human organism however seems to be such that these desires are incompatible, even contradictory. Any human society is free to choose either to display great energy or to enjoy sexual freedom; the evidence is that it cannot do both for more than one generation. Dr. Unwin suggests that the modern world is confronted with two alternatives; it may choose to be continent and energetic or it may prefer sexual indulgence to mental and social energy. M. Paul Bureau, in his very interesting book **Towards Moral Bankruptcy,** traces the origin of ills and evils of modern life and concludes that the great sickness of contemporary society is self-indulgence and rightly lays down the law that the happiness and the wealth of the nations depend upon the health and welfare of their component parts and that there is no enduring happiness and no solid welfare that is not founded on continence in the unmarried and chastity in the married. In this connection, Aldous Huxley remarks that addiction degrades only the addict. Addiction cannot be destroyed by satiation, but tends, if indulged, to become 'demoniac possession'. In the **Sayings of Brother Giles,** it is recorded that amongst all other virtues he would set the virtue of chastity first, because sweet chastity contains all perfection in itself. But there is no other virtue which can ever be perfect without chastity.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that when a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman even as a glass gives a perfect image of an object when its back is painted with mercury solution. Manu advises the

practice of Brahmacharya in order to increase the force of character. In the Mahabharata we read of Sage Narada asking Sukadeva to be the controller of his senses without marrying. Guru Nanak in his **Japji** (XXXVIII, 1-5) says: "Continence is the furnace and patience the goldsmith; pure reason is the anvil, and the Vedas are the tools. Fear of God is the crucible and nectar the substance to be moulded. Thus is the Holy word coined at the Mint of Truth." Sri Krishna lays down in the Bhagavat Gita (VI-7) the vow of continence as one of the three specific means of attaining wisdom.

THE TASK BEFORE YOUNG INDIA

Without continence, the younger generation of our country is getting more and more physically weak and mentally imbecile. Dr. Falrett says that debility of intellect and especially of the memory characterises the mental alienation of the licentious. The Report of Indian Universities says that a large percent of the students are more or less diseased. One of the causes of this appalling state of their health, in the opinion of leading medical men, is the lack of continence. An ex-Inspector of a College of the Calcutta University, while making an appeal to prevent the progress of venereal diseases among the students observed that for some time past he had been noticing with increasing sorrow a gradual deterioration among our students in both their physique and morals. When he inspected the Carmichael Medical College of Calcutta last, he was informed on unimpeachable medical authority that a large percent of the venereal cases treated in the out-door dispensaries of Calcutta are contracted by students of High School classes and

Colleges (Report dated June 5, 1930. Senate House). The Health Offices of Bengal reported that 75% of students are unhealthy in the two University towns of Calcutta and Dacca. The Health Offices of Bombay reported that 90% of students are unhealthy in Karachi. Males in particular of various countries are obsessed with the sex-idea so much that their daily life seems to be vitiated by it. They love to think and talk of women almost always. This is the case not only in India, but also in France, Germany, England, U. S. A. and other countries.

It is said that the German philosopher, Schopenhauer, who used to take his meals at the same table as the officers of a garrison in a German town, used to put beside his plate a piece of gold which he pledged himself to give to the poor the first time he finished his meal without the other guests having talked of women. For many months the philosopher continued the practice and kept his stake. The Atharva Veda declares : ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा देवा मृत्युमुपाघ्नत । i.e. The gods conquered death by continence and penance. The great Bhisma, the grandfather of Pandavas and Kauravas, did conquer death by Brahmacharya. Indrajit was invincible to all except those who could abstain from all sorts of sexual enjoyment at least for 14 years. Lakhsman could kill Indrajit because of his continence for 14 years. Hanuman performed miraculous deeds of carrying a mountain or crossing the sea by a jump by power of Brahmacharya. Emperor Prithviraj attained extraordinary prowess by the practice of continence. By power of Brahmacharya Swami Dayananda could stop the carriage of a Maharaja and break the sword with his hands, and Jnana Dev of Maharastra commanded the five

elements. In the folk-lore of all countries runs the belief that supernatural power is the privilege of the celibates. Westermack favours the view that pollution destroys holiness. A tribe on the Rio Negro enjoins celibacy upon their shamans because they believe that medicines will prove ineffectual if administered by a married man. When the body is built up by continence, one can easily tide over the crisis of a serious disease in much shorter time than one without continence. Continence makes the body strong, the mind healthy, the eyes sparkling, the cheeks shining and the face beaming with magnetic aura. Modern young men and women have got a fad of beauty culture. Let them cultivate the belief that continence is the master-key of all beauty, even outward. In Gurukul, boys were happy, healthy and long-lived.

It is not however too late to mend. If we now start to believe in the creative power of continence, we can not only rebuild our individual life, but also our collective life in a manner unprecedented in the past.

आरभेतैव कर्माणि श्रान्तः श्रान्तः पुनः पुनः ।
कर्माणि आरभमानंहि पुरुषं श्रीर्निषेवते ॥

Even in the face of fatigue and failure one should try his utmost to act up to them repeatedly; for, the more we follow them, the more success in life will crown us.

Longfellow rightly exhorts us :

"Strive to complete the task thou hast commenced;
Wearied, renew thy efforts once again.
Again fatigued, once more thy work begin,
So shalt thou success and fortune win.

GREAT MEN OF EAST & WEST ON CONTINENCE

Before we conclude we present the reader with the following sayings of some great men of East and West on the creative power of continence.

Continence increases infinitely the power of retentiveness and remembrance. Try to gain absolute mastery over thy sexual instinct. If one succeeds in doing this a physiological change is produced in the body by the development of a nerve known by the name of **Medha**, whose function it is to transmute lower energies into the higher. The knowledge of the Higher Self is gained after the formation of this Medha nerve. *Sri Ramakrishna*

Continence being established infinite energy is gained. *Patanjali*

Attainment of continence is the secret of all occult powers unchecked and makes one capable of transmitting powers to others. *Vyasadev*

Those who believe that happiness is in the body and misery in whatever hinders sexual pleasure, how they become satiated with it and die of it! *Pascal*

To be strong, be pure.

Mighelet, the French Thinker

No one but imbeciles mocks at chastity.

M. Justin Godard

The future is for the nations who are chaste.

Thomas Mann

Absolute continence is the key to Buddha-hood.

Bhagavan Buddha

Continence is the *sine qua non* of all spiritual exeperiences.

Swami Shivananda of R. K. Mission.

Continence means chastity in thought, word and deed in all times and in all conditions. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Without chastity there cannot be any spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual guides of humanity have been perfectly continent and this is what gave them power. Whosoever practises unbroken continence for a period of twelve years, will be recipient of all extraordinary powers. If you want to be great, preserve continence without a break. Absolute observance of continence is essential to become a spiritual teacher. Continence is the foundation of the Vedic wisdom. Continent life is a life of crystal purity. By simple practice of strict continence all learning can be mastered in a very short time and one obtains unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our century. Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. The very fact of unmarriedness is a spiritual asset.

Swami Vivekananda

The vow of a voluntary celibate is the best support of the sanctity of the conjugal union.

Foerster

Without Brahmacharya (continence), it is not possible for anyone to hold fast to great ideals. To secure the full development and vitality of the body, brain and mind continence is essential. Those who observe strict continence, develop a strong memory and a remarkable capacity for understanding. By means of continence a special nerve is developed which brings about these special powers. Do you

know why our great teachers have laid so much emphasis upon continence? It is because they knew that if a man fails in this respect everything is lost. The strict Brahmachari does not lose his vitality. He may not look like a great athlete but the development of the brain is so fine that his capacity for grasping super-sensuous things is remarkable. There are certain rules which a Brahmachari should observe. He must avoid exciting food, over-sleep, over-exercise, laziness, bad company and evil conversation. It is continence that strengthens the body and mind. Without continence mind never gains the power of concentration and meditation. Our Shastras say that by observing continence for twelve years very strictly God becomes easy to be realised.

Swami Brahmananda of R. K. Mission

As to love, his counsel was to abstain rigidly from familiarity with beautiful persons, for he observed that it was not easy to be in communication with such persons, and observe continence. He (Socrates) said that perhaps indeed cupids were called archers for no other reason but because the beautiful wound from a distance. For himself he was evidently so disciplined with respect to such matters that he could more easily keep aloof from the fairest and the most blooming objects (and individuals) than others from the most deformed and unattractive.

Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates

Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of penances. A celibate who is endowed with spotless chastity, is not a human being indeed but a god. To the celibate who conserves the semen with great

efforts what is there unattainable in this world? By the power of the composure of semen, one will become just like myself. *Sankaracharya*

Lust ruins life, lustre, strength, vitality, memory, wealth, fame, holiness and devotion to Truth.

Sri Krishna

Caution in diet is of three-fold value but abstinence from sexuality is of four-fold value. Though the sexual propensities are at first like ripples, they acquire the proportion of sea on account of bad company. *Narada*

Death is hastened by loss of semen but life is prolonged by preserving it. Everybody therefore must try his best to lead a life of continence as far as practicable. *Shiva Samhita*

A wise man should avoid married life, as if it were a burning pit of live coals. From the contact comes sensation, from sensation thirst; by ceasing from contact, one is saved from all sinfulness. *Buddha*

It is a sin to see the animals pair or to look at men or women with sexual motives. *Srimad Bhagavat*

Debility of intellect specially of the memory characterises the mental alienation of the licentious.

Dr. Louis

Bhisma says to Yudhistir, "O King, know that in this world, there is nothing that cannot be attained by one who remains from birth to death a perfect celibate. In one person there is knowledge of the four Vedas and in another, there is perfect celibacy; of these the latter is superior to the former who is wanting in celibacy. *Mahabharat*

APPENDIX I

Yogic Postures

Some yogic postures, particularly Gorakshasana and Siddhasana are very conducive to continence. Gorakshasana is practised thus: First, join the soles of the feet together in front of the genitals, with the toes pointing outwards. Now, move the body (by lifting it slightly from the ground, and placing the weight on the two extended hands) and putting the two heels under the anus. Let the feet cover the seam of the perineum breadthwise and hide the legs (from the knees down) by their respective thighs. Keep the hands pressed on the knees so as to cause a steady pull posteriorly, varying the strength as desired by a downward pressure upon the knees.

This posture by working upon the connective muscles of the groin and the thigh indirectly stretches both the superficial as well as the deeper urino-genital muscles, and thus aids elasticity of the respective muscular fibres and corresponding increase in the circulation of blood.

The technique of the Siddhasana is as follows:-

Take your seat with your legs fully stretched out. Then bend the left leg in the knee-joint and folding it upon itself set its heel tightly against the perineum. The sole of the left foot should lie closely in touch with the right thigh. Do not sit on the heel. What is to be noted is that the pressure is to be exerted on the perineum and not on the anus. The adjusted heel should feel the hard touch of the bones on the two sides of the perineum. After the left leg is given its proper position, the genitals should be arranged within the space available between the left thigh and the

left calf. This being done, the right leg should be folded after the manner of the left, its heel being placed against the pubic bones just above the penis. The right sole should spread along the left thigh, the lower border of the right foot being thrust between the left thigh and the left calf. The spine is to be kept erect, the chin set against the chest and the hands resting on the knees touching them with their palms.

APPENDIX II

The Science of Breathing

PSYCHO-PHYSICAL exercises of breathing play a very important part in the religious practices and spiritual discipline of India. It is one of the eight essentials of yogic esotericism and is popularly known as 'Pranayam'. The science of Breathing is called 'Anapan Sati' in Buddhism, and in other religions, such as Chinese Taoism, Indian Jainism, Persian Sufism, Christian Mysticism, Alexandrian Gnosticism, Jewish Quabblism and Egyptian Hermeticism, it exists in some form or other. There is a vast literature in Sanskrit on this subject, unknown to the educated world. Only a fragment of it is translated and popularised by the Theosophical Society.

'Pranayam' generally means control of breath. But unfortunately 'Pran' is mistranslated as life or breath. In fact, there is marked difference between the Indian conception of 'Pran' and the Western conception of life. Life, according to modern biology, is an accidental precipitation, decomposition or crystallisation of atoms and molecules. Vitality is the result of the mechanical activity of organs. Living Protoplasm is the chemical combination of certain elements. Prof. Watson, the founder of the Behaviourist School of Psychology, thinks that consciousness, the fundamental principle of life is an 'epiphenomenon' and a function of the brain and not an entity. But to the Indian conception it is an absurd statement that life comes from non-life; on the other hand 'Pran' is the cosmic life-principle. 'Pran' is the cause of the movement of sun and moon, stars, planets and satellites, solar, stellar and nebular systems.

It is manifested as attraction and repulsion, electricity and magnetism, heat, light and gravitation, and in short, all motion in the inorganic world. The same 'Pran' is expressed as plant life, animal life and human life and all other life in the sentient world. It is the Universal Principle of living existence and continuity of the two-fold worlds of life and matter. No line of demarcation can be drawn between human life and animal life, animal life and plant life or between living and non-living. The all-pervasiveness of 'Pran' may be poetically described in this way: 'Pran' "sleeps in stones, breathes in plants, moves in animals and walks up in man."

This cosmic life is localised or individualised as life in the human body. It has different names in different parts of the body according to different functions. 'Pran' is its seat in the heart and goes upward and its presence is directly felt at the tip of the nose. 'Apana' is the vital force which goes downwards below the navel and is in the organs of excretion. 'Vyana' moves in all directions and pervades the entire body. 'Udana' is the ascending force in the throat that causes vomiting yawning, and eructation, etc. 'Samana', in the middle of the body, assimilates food and drink and converts them into chyle, blood, and other materials of the body. 'Pran' is the cause of all involuntary activities of the system either in dream, sleep or waking state.* If anybody can control 'Pran' in himself, he gains control over 'Pran' in others. He becomes the master of super-normal powers. But breath being only the tangible manifestation of 'Pran' to control it, it is necessary to control

* The mind being a subtler form of 'Pran', it controls life as the rider of the horse. But the body is propelled by 'Pran' like an automobile.

breath. Hence the inevitable necessity of breathing exercises.

Our ordinary breathing is so irregular that it cannot be called breathing at all. This irregularity is the root of all sickness in man. Moreover, when the mind is under the sway of anger or any violent passion, breathing is quick, short and regular. At this stage some sort of poison* is created in the body which is so strong that it sometimes kills a man. Instances of such deaths are not rare. If during this time the breath of the man is passed through a solution in a glass tube, distinct changes will be observed, but the breath of a normal man will bring no such change. On the other hand, if the mind be full of thoughts of peace, happiness, love and bliss, breathing is long, deep and slow. When the mind is absorbed in any interesting study, sweet music, or scenic beauty, or if the mind is concentrated in prayer or meditation, the breath is regular, long and deep. So the aim of the breathing exercises should be to prolong, deepen and regulate breath. Ordinarily, we use only one-sixth of the capacity of the lungs, but if the remaining five-sixths can be utilised in respiration, man can work miracles. It is the unused major portion of the lungs that is the depot of disease-bacilli of Phthisis, Asthma, etc.† I know personally a friend of mine who got rid of his chronic asthma by practising breathing exercises only for a few weeks. 'Pranayam' helps to make habitual use of the full capacity of the lungs.

The first as well as the safest and simplest exercise is this: Take your seat cross-legged on a cushion,

* For further details see 'How to be a Yogi' by Swami Avedananda.
† For further details see 'Pranayam' by Swami Kuvalayananda.

or no matter, if on a chair, with out-stretched legs, facing the open window of your bed room. It can be practised while standing early in the morning either on a beach, river-side or any open space or near the hills. In a measured way breathe in and out. Breathe in regularly,* rhythmically, harmoniously as if in accompaniment of some music to your comfortable capacity, and then without retaining the breath inside even for second breathe out as before. After that without retaining the breath at all outside, breathe in as before. One such inhalation and one such exhalation make one complete exercise. Twenty such exercises are enough at a time. At least twice a day morning and evening, it must be repeated regularly for three months when distinct results will be attained. While taking the exercise, the inspiration and expiration must be very slow and simple, not artificial or rapid. The foremost requisite for a practitioner is patience and regularity. A rash student is sure to come to grief. Success without fail attends patient practice. It is better if the other exercises are practically learnt from an expert.

The first results attained are these: The bowels will move very easily. Even chronic constipation is bound to yield to this practice. You will have a good appetite. The complexion will be fair as blood will be purified. The voice will be sweeter. No yogi has a croaking voice. Dullness and dejection, morbidity and moroseness, will disappear and continuous cheerfulness will take their place. Harsh lines will no longer be found on the face. Tired and exhausted nerves will be soothed. You will enjoy a rest beyond compare. Compared to that rest, the rest of sleep is

* For further details see Rajayoga by Swami Vivekananda.

nothing. You will feel that you had never rested in your life. There are many yogis who live without sleep. Because during 'Pranayam' our individual life makes contact with the cosmic life consciously and directly that renews and replenishes, energises and revitalises our nervous system. New cells are created in the body. Sleep only brings us into touch with cosmic life indirectly and unconsciously. Hence the necessity of sleep for ordinary man. The sense organs are extraordinarily sharpened. Man gets Radio-ears for he can hear from a great distance without a telephone or radiophone. Man gets Rontgen eye with natural television and can see without telescope or microscope from a distance and so on. Every newspaper reader knows how recently an engineer of Poland stumbled on his brain power to hear without a receiver, all the broadcasting operations. By breathing exercises man can naturally develop his latent powers from within.

Besides, breathing exercises have wonderful physiological values. We all know there are four fundamental elements in nature, namely, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen and carbon. Of these four oxygen is the most important. One-fifth of the atmosphere is oxygen, eight-ninths by weight of seawater and all water is oxygen. More than about half of the rocks and all solid substance and more than half of the vegetable kingdom is oxygen. If a man weighs 150 lbs., about 140 lbs. is oxygen. The air we breathe in contains 21 per cent. of oxygen but when we breathe out the same it will contain 12 per cent. only, as the system absorbs 88 per cent. in the blood. We breathe out carbon dioxide and the plant kingdom absorbs it and breathes out oxygen. So it is a custom with the yogis

to keep close contact with Nature by living and lying under trees, etc. Only recently, nature cure specialists and other scientists have begun to realise the hygienic values of these age-old Indian customs, so long neglected and misinterpreted as superstitious and rustic.

The oxygen entering into the lungs passes through the pulmonary capillaries into the blood and the haemoglobin molecules of it are oxidised by it forming oxy-haemoglobins. These oxy-haemoglobin corpuscles in the blood are the most important substances which counteract all attacks of disease germs. The more a system can absorb oxygen the better for it. Even the dying man is allowed to inhale oxygen in order to make him linger in this world a few more minutes. With long practice man can be absolutely without any food and can live entirely on air. There are yogis who can live on air alone. Oxygen is the breath of life. Zoologists have found out that some snakes and other animals live absolutely on air a few months of the year. The great Indian Yogi Pauhari Baba lived on air alone. There are 75 pulses in a minute and in one pulsation two ounces of blood passes through the lungs; in 3 minutes all the blood of the body which is about one-fifth of the whole weight of the body would have done so. So breathing exercises should be practised for 15 minutes at a stretch. As the human system is made of five elements, **Ksiti, Ap, Teja, Marut and Byom,** or solid, liquid, gas, etc., its sustenance requires food-stuffs of these five elements. But we ordinarily take more solid and liquid foods and neglect the rest. That is why the nervous system is clogged and congested with morbid matter. There are about 72,000 nadis or

nerves in the body, according to yogic science. These nerves are the vehicles of 'Pran'. When the humors in the nerves are cleansed, retention of breath becomes easy. Free circulation of 'Pran' being checked, there is either superfluity or lack of 'Pran' in parts of the body, and this is the cause of disease in man. When 'Pran' flows smoothly and freely everywhere, the body is totally immune from illness. Breathing exercises alone can do that permanently.

If the system can absorb sufficient air, solid food is redundant. When the nerves are purified by practice of 'Pranayam' the body becomes very light. When breathing exercises are performed, the first sign will be profuse perspiration, owing to the foreign matter being dislodged from the system. The second stage is flux or tremor. The third stage is levitation. The body will be lighter than air and can float in the air. In the preliminary stage, the aspirant will feel that his body has no weight and that it is as light as down. He will not so much feel the necessity of rest and sleep. He will get an inexhaustible supply of energy from the dynamo within. Health, holiness and happiness are one and the same thing. By these exercises the parts will be united with the whole. Man can transmit health at will from himself to other bodies. We know how Babar transferred his life and longevity to his son, Humayun. Man can prolong his life by reducing the number of breathings. We know how Sadhu Haridas of India did so. By the order of the Raja Ranjit Singh he was placed in a hermetically sealed box and buried in an underground cell for forty days. After the period he was found alive.

The second exercise is to breathe in and out

through both the nostrils as in the first, but to hold the breath outside as much as possible, easily. The third exercise is to hold the breath inside as in the second. The fourth is to breathe in through the left nostril closing the right rhythmically as before. Breathe out in the same way without retaining inside and again breathe in without retaining outside. The fifth one is to breathe in for 4 seconds, retain for 8 seconds and breathe out in 16 seconds.

In order to ensure health and happiness breathe through the left during day time and through the right during night. If you can breathe through the right from 10 minutes before meals to ten minutes after meals, digestion is very easy. Breathe through the left when in rest. Never sleep on the back and scarcely on the right side as the nervous system is pressed, disturbing the flow of 'Pran'. Lie down always on the left. During activity breath flows through the right. But when the mind is concentrated in meditation breath flows through both 'Ida' and 'Pingala', i.e., through the third nostril 'Sushumna' situated in the vertebral column in the back-bone. When breath flows through the third nostril nerve centres, infinite potential powers are opened and man becomes almost Almighty. Breathing exercises can be practised by boys and girls. Mahatma Gandhi is a great advocate of breathing exercises.

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